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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

PART I: NATIONAL MINORITIES IN EASTERN EUROPE

THE TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA

FEBRUARY 3, 1987

Printed for the use of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

[CSCE 100-1-1]

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
72-407 WASHINGTON : 1987

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402

J891-5

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PUBLIC HEARING ON THE TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1987

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
Washington, DC.

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, in room 2218, Rayburn House Office Building, at 10 a.m., Representative Steny Hoyer (cochairman) presiding.

In attendance: Commissioners Senator DeConcini, Representatives John Porter, Christopher H. Smith and Hon. Richard Schifter.

Also in attendance: Michael R. Hathaway, staff director, and Mary Sue Hafner, general counsel of the Commission.

OPENING STATEMENT OF COCHAIRMAN STENY HOYER

Chairman HOYER. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We are right on time.

Although not yet chairman of the Commission because neither the Speaker nor the Majority Leader of the Senate have formally acted, we will proceed on the presumption that continuity will prevail. Senator DeConcini, to my right, not yet cochairman because nothing has happened on the Senate side either, and I are very appreciative of all the witnesses who are joining us today.

I want to thank our witnesses for coming before the Commission this morning to testify on the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

I am pleased to welcome a fellow member of the Helsinki Commission, Assistant Secretary of State Schifter, who has worked tirelessly in the field of human rights. Ambassador Schifter was the head of the delegation to the Ottawa Experts Meeting on Human Rights in 1985, so we can say, of course, that he is an old Helsinki hand, as well.

I am also very pleased to welcome two men whom I had the pleasure of meeting in November in Istanbul, Turkey. Both of them, Mr. Ibisoglu and Mr. Goltz, are particularly valuable witnesses with a compelling story to tell.

I want to thank them for their efforts to bring to public attention the incredible, ongoing story of a government's attempts to assimilate forcibly a sizable and dynamic national minority. We appreciate their courageous efforts to inform us of this situation about which we in Congress and the American public at large know relatively little.

Today's hearing is the first—I want to emphasize that—first in a series of Helsinki Commission hearings on national minorities in Eastern Europe which we have planned for this year.

The role and treatment of various national minorities in the region are sensitive subjects which we at the Commission feel have not received the attention they deserve.

In many parts of the world, in fact, national minorities are not afforded the rights guaranteed in international documents such as the Helsinki Final Act, with which this Commission is particularly concerned and focuses upon.

Future Commission hearings will focus on Hungarians, Germans and Gypsies in Eastern Europe.

In late 1984, the Bulgarian Government launched a campaign to assimilate its Turkish minority in Bulgaria. This campaign is perhaps the most egregious example of a broad and continuing pattern of the denial of rights to all of the people of Bulgaria, who have suffered for decades under a system of strict Communist control.

Despite widespread resistance, it is reported that in excess of 900,000 ethnic Turks were compelled through threats and violence to change their names during the first part of a campaign to stamp out all traces of the Turkish culture in Bulgaria. It is our understanding that campaign continues to this date.

Principle VII of the Helsinki Final Act calls upon signatory states to respect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and thus enshrines the right of a person to choose his or her own cultural or ethnic identity.

Clearly, if the reports are accurate that we have received, then the Bulgarian Government has flagrantly violated its solemn commitments under the Final Act.

This hearing is intended to highlight the tragedies that are inflicted by a government intent on destroying an entire people's identity.

The Commission is also particularly interested in hearing from our witnesses what we can do, as a Commission, as a Congress and as individual Members of the Congress of the United States to assist in addressing this particular problem.

At this time I would like to recognize one of the ranking members, I suppose, is the way I will describe him now—of the Commission, who has been very active, who recently went with me to the Vienna Review Conference, and who has been one of the most faithful participants and leaders of the Helsinki Commission. As one of the Senate's and the Congress' most outspoken Members on behalf of the rights guaranteed not only by the Helsinki Final Act but by other international documents to all citizens throughout the world, the Commission is honored to have Senator DeConcini as a member.

STATEMENT OF SENATOR DENNIS DeCONCINI FROM ARIZONA

Senator DECONCINI. Chairman Hoyer, thank you. I like the term "chairman," and as far as I am concerned you will be the chairman, and we will in time put it all together.

I want to thank you for holding these hearings, the first in a series, as you pointed out, on minorities in Eastern Europe.

Today we are going to focus on the tragic fate of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

I have had the pleasure of working with Congressman Hoyer for the past 2 years and have seen his dedication. He is starting off on the run and I compliment you and the staff for this.

I would like also to welcome our witnesses. Ambassador, we welcome you once again and applaud you for your persistence and the time that you devote to this issue. I know it is your job, but you do more than just that, and we thank you.

The condition of approximately 900,000 ethnic Turks living in Bulgaria is of concern to us here. We are fortunate to have such a distinguished group to appear today before us.

Over a decade ago, 33 European nations, as well as Canada and the United States, joined together in signing the Helsinki accords, an international document of principles designed to ensure security and cooperation in Europe.

In agreeing to the Helsinki accords, the signatory states pledged to the world that they would respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.

In addition, the signatory states pledged to the world that they would respect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

Unfortunately, blatant abuse of these basic rights is evident in many signatory countries.

Today, as part of the process of reviewing international compliance with the provisions of the Helsinki accords we will be addressing an important issue that is often overlooked in the West.

I hope that this public forum will help to bring a greater awareness of what is happening to the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, and what can be done to alleviate their suffering.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of Dr. Orkovatz of Maryland, I would like to submit a statement for the record, to appear at this time.

Chairman HOYER. Without objection.

[The document referred to follows:]

STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY
FREE BULGARIAN CENTER
5540 North Ocean Drive, Apt. 9B
Singer Island, FL 33404

The recent treatment of the Turkish population in Bulgaria, undeniably cruel and unjust, could not be considered separately from the conditions of oppression, abuse of human rights and assorted discriminations, which have been and still are the lot of the entire Bulgarian nation, under the Communist regime, a regime supported and directed by the government of the Soviet Union.

It is well known that since the totalitarian Communist system was imposed in Bulgaria, tens of thousands of the Bulgarian people have been killed, imprisoned, forcibly relocated, persecuted and denied all human liberties and rights. The deplorable happenings of late, concerning the Turkish minority, are but one more example of the unrelenting abuse and repression the whole Bulgarian Nation continues to face today.

Senator DeConcini. And further, Mr. Chairman, I understand that we have a member of the Parliament from the Republic of Turkey who is here, Mr. Soysal.

Mr. Soysal, would you please stand up and be recognized? We welcome you here and we are very pleased to have you here with your Prime Minister this week.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Hoyer. Thank you, Senator.

I would like to point out, as well, that Mr. Soysal is not only a member of the National Parliament of Turkey, but is also an officer in the North Atlantic Assembly, and in that context he and I have become good friends. I also want to welcome him as well.

We also have Mr. Ahmet Sandik, who is the Executive Director of the Balkan Turks of America, who will be interpreting for Mr. Ibisoglu. We appreciate his being here.

Senator DeConcini. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Hoyer. Senator.

Senator DeConcini. I am going to have to leave in about 20 minutes to attend an Appropriations Defense Subcommittee hearing, but I will have staff here. I just want to make my apologies at this time. The subcommittee has been meeting since 9:30 and we have some important weapons systems on the supplemental. I hope the Chairman will excuse me.

Chairman Hoyer. I appreciate the Senator's responsibilities, which are dual, as are all of ours, and reiterate that, Senator, you have been certainly one of the most faithful participants and leaders in this Commission's work, and I very much appreciate that.

At this time I would like to re-introduce Ambassador Richard Schifter, who perhaps needs no introduction to this Commission.

Born in Vienna, Austria in 1923, he came to the United States in 1938; went to CCNY, a graduate of there; a graduate of Yale Law School; a lawyer in Washington, DC, a resident, I am proud to say, of the State of Maryland, and currently the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

As I mentioned earlier, he was our Ambassador to the Ottawa Human Rights Experts Meeting held in the spring of 1985, and did an outstanding job. He has been appointed by the State Department to be the State Department's representative on this Commission. We very much appreciate his attendance and look forward to his testimony.

Ambassador Schifter.

Ambassador Schifter. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

In my biographical material, Mr. Chairman, you did not add that I also supported you in your first run for office 21 years ago.

Chairman Hoyer. I don't know why they didn't include that. That is a critical aspect of your biography and it should be there.

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR RICHARD SCHIFTER

Ambassador Schifter. Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the Commission for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today on the subject of the national minorities problem in Eastern Europe, with specific reference to the situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

As the third follow-up meeting under the Helsinki Final Act has just begun its second session, it is particularly appropriate for us to pay attention to the various human rights problems that do not normally make it to the front page of our newspapers.

Let me begin by calling your attention to the provision in Principle VII of the Helsinki Final Act which deals directly with the question under consideration here. It reads as follows, and I quote:

> The participating States on whose territory national minorities exist will respect the right of persons belonging to such minorities to equality before the law, will afford them the full opportunity for the actual enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and will, in this manner, protect their legitimate interests in this sphere.

National minorities do exist on the territory of a good many of the participating States. In some of these, such as Switzerland, the problem of adjusting to the presence within a single country of groups speaking different languages has long ago been worked out.

In others, the problems are still acute, but are dealt with in a democratic framework.

There is one group of states, however, in which nationality problems result in severe repression. I am referring to some of the states in the Soviet bloc, in which repression against national minorities is just one aspect of the deprivation of the rights of individuals by an all-powerful government.

It is indeed ironic that this should be the case, when we consider that the states in question all profess the Leninist creed and that it was Lenin who in 1913, in his Thesis on the National Question, committed his movement to the "unconditional equality of all nationalities."

It is the chauvinism which he derided as "bourgeois nationalism" which is now being practiced in the Leninist states.

In a number of these countries, such as Albania and above all Bulgaria, the dominant ethnic group that controls the Government has used compulsion to try to end the existence of national minorities as identifiable groups and forcibly integrate them into the majority.

In other cases, such as those of the ethnic Hungarians in Romania and a variety of national minorities in the Soviet Union, there has been a steady erosion of minority rights.

However, in all of Eastern Europe, no ethnic minority has suffered harsher discrimination in recent years than the Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

In the period from December 1984 to March 1985, the Bulgarian Government conducted a massive assimilation campaign, using force where necessary, to compel approximately 1 million ethnic Turks living in Bulgaria—about 10 percent of the entire population—to accept Slavic names.

Reliable reports from various highly credible sources, including eyewitnesses—and let me add, eyewitnesses whom I personally have heard—impartial nongovernmental organizations and news reports, have corroborated the harshness of the assimilation campaign, citing instances where entire villages were surrounded by troops with tanks and dogs. Soldiers would then go house-to-house with the necessary papers to effect name changes.

Amnesty International has compiled a list of names of more than 250 ethnic Turks who were arrested and imprisoned for resisting this name-change program.

Numerous other sources have reported that as many as 100 resisters were killed during the campaign.

Repression of the ethnic Turkish minority in Bulgaria did not cease with completion of the name-change campaign. Broader repressive measures aimed at destroying the Turkish community's cultural identity and restricting the practice of Islam continue unabated.

The Bulgarian Government has halted radio broadcasts in the Turkish language, as well as publication of Turkish language newspapers. Education in the Turkish language was terminated earlier, in the 1970's.

Fines have now been imposed for speaking Turkish and wearing traditional Turkish clothing. Certain Islamic practices, such as circumcision and religious burials, have been banned.

While some mosques have been permitted to function on a restricted basis where the local Imam has cooperated with authorities, others have been closed or converted to other purposes and their religious officials arrested.

As a result of this name-change campaign, Bulgaria was able in 1985 to conduct a census, at the conclusion of which it announced that there were no ethnic Turks in the country. In the 1965 census, 746,755 persons were listed as of Turkish ancestry.

Since then, Amnesty International estimates the number of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria who have emigrated to Turkey, as they were allowed to for a brief period in the 1970's, to be approximately 60,000.

Given this figure and the high birth rate of the Turkish minority, the total population of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria is now believed to be in excess of 900,000. While there have been no official figures for the total numbers of members of ethnic minorities since 1965, it is apparent that the 900,000 figure is an accurate minimum estimate.

The forced assimilation of Bulgarian Turks is contrary to the Bulgarian Constitution, which, in writing but not in practice, guarantees equality regardless of nationality or religious affiliation, and the right of non-Bulgarian citizens to study their own language. Constitutional guarantees are, regrettably, of little value in these parts of the world.

It may be of interest to the Commission that the U.S. Government has spoken out forcefully on the issue of the Turkish minority at many international meetings, including the Ottawa Human Rights Experts Meeting in the spring of 1985, at the Budapest Cultural Forum in the fall of 1985, at the United Nations Human Rights Commission session that concluded in Geneva last March 1986, at the Bern Human Contacts Experts Meeting in May 1986, at the May session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York, and at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in November 1986. Most recently, we have also spoken out at the present CSCE meetings in Vienna.

During his visit to Turkey in 1986, Secretary Shultz stated publicly that the United States strongly supports efforts to defend the right of the Turkish-speaking Muslims in Bulgaria to preserve their religious and cultural identity.

The State Department has also raised this flagrant and gross violation of the human rights of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria in virtually all our bilateral discussions with the Bulgarian Government, including, let me say, the bilateral discussions that are going on this week.

Our Ambassador to Bulgaria, Melvyn Levitsky, repeatedly has made clear to the Bulgarian Government that the U.S. Government considers human rights to be an issue that will significantly influence the course of future United States-Bulgarian relations.

Thus, we are committed to expressing our concerns in bilateral contacts with the Bulgarian Government and to focusing international attention at every opportunity on the serious problem of the cultural repression of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria.

We shall remain so committed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for your statement. And I want to say that the Commission has noted, as you have noted, the actions of the State Department and of our Government to press this issue in all the forums that you have set forth.

As you mentioned—of course, Ambassador Zimmermann has brought up this issue, as well, and as I think you also know, when I addressed the plenary session in Vienna in November, I specifically mentioned the concern of our Government and of this Commission regarding the Bulgarian Government's treatment of the Turks. At that point the Bulgarian representative took that opportunity to invite the Commission to Bulgaria to see for itself.

We have not had any further communication on that issue. However, after discussions within the Commission, we will consider the invitation. Our consideration of the invitation reflects our concern on this important issue.

Let me ask you, Mr. Ambassador, does the State Department have any recent estimates on the number of ethnic Turks imprisoned in connection with the campaign of forceful assimilation?

Ambassador SCHIFTER. Our understanding is, it is a few hundred.

Chairman HOYER. A few hundred. Have there been any deaths, as far as you know, in the course of this?

Ambassador SCHIFTER. We believe about 100.

Chairman HOYER. Now, Mr. Ambassador, this is an issue which you did not specifically speak to, but of course in the last couple of years there has been a great deal of controversy with respect to Bulgaria's action in the international community. Obviously, there have been allegations raised in recent years of complicity in the assassination attempt of Pope John Paul II, and in engaging in other international activities contrary to international law.

Now, given this extremely negative image, why do you think the Government of Bulgaria is adding to this by this particular campaign?

Ambassador SCHIFTER. You always have to ask yourself that question. The impression—this is just largely a personal impression, perhaps also based in part on discussions with others—my impression is the following:

We start out with this strong commitment to nationalism that I have spoken to before. The Bulgarian Government wants to have a Bulgarian state.

There are questions that have come up from time to time involving, let's say, Macedonians, Greeks, and above all, Turks who constitute, as I indicated in my testimony, 10 percent of the population.

The birth rate of the Turks is significantly higher than that of the Slavs. So, what they were looking at was a possibility that in time that percentage would begin to creep up.

So, in Leninist fashion, may I say, they then just decided, we are going to clamp down, turn them all into Bulgarians, and that is what they just went about doing as systematically as they possibly could.

Chairman HOYER. Mr. Ambassador——

Ambassador SCHIFTER. It is something very difficult for us to understand, that this is something that can be done, but it is done.

Senator DECONCINI. Does that lower the birth rate?

Ambassador SCHIFTER. No. But, you know, the idea is, from now on, supposedly, these people will be Bulgarians.

Senator DECONCINI. All Bulgarians.

Ambassador SCHIFTER. As a matter of fact, there is one thing that I found particularly ironic. It is my understanding that when they were giving out names to some of the Islamic religious persons, they would give them the name of Christos, and it would be, mind you, a Communist government that would be doing that, sort of rubbing it in.

Chairman HOYER. Which, of course, resulted in the announcement that the minority that had existed no longer existed.

Ambassador SCHIFTER. It was gone.

Chairman HOYER. The fact of the matter, Mr. Ambassador, is that Bulgaria, I suppose, is the closest to the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union line. In fact, Bulgaria has sometimes been referred to as the 16th Republic of the Soviet Union. I am sure they don't appreciate that, and I don't know how valid that is, but that has certainly been the assertion.

It is our understanding, we have information that the Bulgarian actions, however, have tended to embarrass the Soviet Union. Do you have any indication as to what the Soviet role has been or might be in response to this policy?

Ambassador SCHIFTER. Well, I assume that it is on their own. If the Soviets really felt very strongly, my hunch would be that if Mr.—let's see now, who would have been the Soviet General Secretary at the time—I guess this was during the period of Chernenko.

If Mr. Chernenko had picked up the telephone and would have told Mr. Zhivkov, cut it out, chances are they would have cut it out.

Chairman HOYER. So, we have no information at all that this—although there is an allegation that——

Ambassador SCHIFTER. We keep hearing that the Soviets are embarrassed.

Chairman HOYER. But they didn't do anything.

Ambassador SCHIFTER. Well, let's put it this way, not sufficiently embarrassed to really put their foot down.

Chairman **Hoyer**. Now, Mr. Ambassador, again, you have reiterated a number of forums in which we have raised this issue. The Commission has raised the issue. Other than raising this in international fora, what actions have we taken in response to this campaign? And perhaps more importantly, what is it that we can do in the future, in your opinion?

Ambassador **Schifter**. Mr. Chairman, you are referring to one of the fundamental problems in our human rights approach, precisely what is it that we can do to change things.

In the case of Bulgaria, our leverage is really quite limited. What we can simply say is, if you are interested in, let's say, improving your economic situation—and they have, as so many of these countries in Eastern Europe, they have an economic situation that indeed needs to be improved. If you think of the standard of living under which the people there live—in that situation, we can, as I say, send this particular message.

For the rest of it, what is most important is that we try to reach the public with our message. A hearing such as this is very important in that regard.

You cannot effect in a situation where our leverage is so limited, you cannot effect immediate change. The only way you can make an impact is by speaking out over time—keep the issue on the agenda, don't permit anyone to simply sweep it under the rug. One can hope that over time this will have an impact.

Chairman **Hoyer**. Mr. Secretary, I thank you for that comment. As Senator DeConcini has observed, this hearing is going to be one of a series in an attempt to keep the issues that we believe are very important before the American public and before the Congress. It is our intent to maintain this issue on the front burner at every level of communication, whether in private, whether at a parliamentary delegation meeting, or administration to administration, because we feel very strongly about it.

And again, as I have said so many times, this is an issue on which the administration and the Congress are clearly in 100 percent agreement. The unity of action that we demonstrate on it will strengthen our position.

So, I thank you for being here.

Senator DeConcini. Would you like to——

Senator **DeConcini**. No, I have no further questions. I just want to thank the Ambassador, too, and assure him that we look forward to perhaps having him appear a number of times, to address some of the specifics of these countries and the ethnic persecution and discrimination. You have a wealth of information to help us keep this issue before the public, both the world public and the American public and the Congress.

Thank you.

Chairman **Hoyer**. Thank you, Senator.

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

Ambassador **Schifter**. Thank you very much.

[Following written statement of the Honorable Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State:]

Statement of
The Honorable Richard Schifter
Assistant Secretary of State
Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs

before the

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Tuesday, February 3, 1987

I am grateful to the Commission for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today on the subject of the national minorities problem in Eastern Europe, with specific reference to the situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. As the third follow-up meeting under the Helsinki Final Act has just begun its second session, it is particularly appropriate for us to pay attention to the various human rights problems that do not normally make it to the front page of our newspapers.

Let me begin by calling your attention to the provision in Principal VII of the Helsinki Final Act which deals directly with the question under consideration here. It reads as follows:

> "The participating States on whose territory national minorities exist will respect the right of persons belonging to such minorities to equality before the law, will afford them the full opportunity for the actual enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and will, in this manner, protect their legitimate interests in this sphere."

National minorities do exist on the territory of a good many of the participating States. In some of these, such as Switzerland, the problem of adjusting to the presence within a single country of groups speaking different languages has long ago been worked out. In others, the problems are still acute, but are dealt with in a democratic framework. There is one group of states, however, in which nationality problems result in severe repression. I am referring to some of the states in the Soviet bloc, in which repression against national minorities is just one aspect of the deprivation of the rights of individuals by an all-powerful government.

It is indeed ironic that this should be the case, when we consider that the states in question all profess the Leninist creed and it was Lenin who in 1913 in his "Thesis on the National Question" committed his movement to the "unconditional equality of all nationalities." It is the chauvinism which he derided as "bourgeois nationalism" which is now being practiced in the Leninist states.

In a number of these countries, such as Albania and above all Bulgaria, the dominant ethnic group that controls the government has used compulsion to try to end the existence of national minorities as identifiable groups and forcibly integrate them into the majority. In other cases, such as those of the ethnic Hungarians in Romania and a variety of national minorities in the Soviet Union, there has been a steady erosion of minority rights.

However, in all of Eastern Europe, no ethnic minority has suffered harsher discrimination in recent years than the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. In the period from December 1984 to March 1985, the Bulgarian Government conducted a massive assimilation campaign, using force where necessary, to compel approximately one million ethnic Turks living in Bulgaria -- about ten percent of the entire population -- to accept Slavic names.

Reliable reports from various highly credible sources, including eye-witnesses, impartial non-governmental organizations and news reports have corroborated the harshness of the assimilation campaign, citing instances where entire villages were surrounded by troops with tanks and dogs. Soldiers would then go house to house with the necessary papers to effect name changes. Amnesty International has compiled a list of names of more than 250 ethnic Turks who were arrested and imprisoned for resisting this name change program. Numerous other sources have reported that as many as one hundred resisters were killed during the campaign.

Repression of the ethnic Turkish minority in Bulgaria did not cease with completion of the name-change campaign. Broader repressive measures aimed at destroying the Turkish community's cultural identity and restricting the practice of Islam continue unabated. The Bulgarian government has halted radio broadcasts in the Turkish language, as well as publication of Turkish language newspapers. Education in the Turkish language was terminated earlier, in the 1970s. Fines have now been imposed for speaking Turkish and wearing traditional Turkish clothing. Certain Islamic practices, such as circumcision and religious burials, have been banned. While some mosques have been permitted to function on a restricted basis where the local Imam has cooperated with authorities, others have been closed or converted to other purposes and their religious officials arrested.

As a result of this name change campaign, Bulgaria was able, in 1985, to conduct a census at the conclusion of which it announced that there were no ethnic Turks in the country. In the 1965 census, 746,755 persons were listed as of Turkish ancestry. Since then, Amnesty International estimates the number of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria who have emigrated to Turkey, as they were allowed to for a brief period in the Seventies, to be approximately 60,000. Given this figure and the high birth rate of the Turkish minority, the total population of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria is now believed to be at least 900,000. While there have been no official figures for the total numbers of members of ethnic minorities since 1965, it is apparent that the 900,000 figure is an accurate minimum estimate.

The forced assimilation of Bulgarian Turks is contrary to the Bulgarian Constitution, which, in writing but not in practice, guarantees equality regardless of nationality or religious affiliation, and the right of non-Bulgarian citizens to study their own language. Constitutional guarantees are, regrettably, of little value in these parts of the world.

It may be of interest to the Commission that the United States Government has spoken out forcefully on the issue of the Turkish minority at many international meetings, including the Ottawa Human Rights Experts Meeting in the Spring of 1985, at the Budapest Cultural Forum in the Fall of 1985, at the United Nations Human Rights Commission session that concluded in Geneva last March, at the Bern Human Contacts Experts Meeting in May, at the May session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council in New York, the United Nations General Assembly in New York in November 1986 and, most recently, at the CSCE meetings in Vienna. During his visit to Turkey in 1986, Secretary Shultz stated publicly that the United States strongly supports efforts to defend the right of the Turkish-speaking Muslims in Bulgaria to preserve their religious and cultural identity. The State Department has also raised this flagrant and gross violation of the human rights of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria in virtually all our bilateral discussions with the Bulgarian government. And our Ambassador to Bulgaria, Melvyn Levitsky, repeatedly has made clear to the Bulgarian government that the United States Government considers human rights to be an issue that will significantly influence the course of future U.S.-Bulgarian relations. Thus, we are committed to expressing our concerns in bilateral contacts with the Bulgarian Government and to focusing international attention at every opportunity on the serious problem of the cultural repression of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria. We shall remain so committed.

Chairman Hoyer. At this time I would like to ask Mr. Halil Ibisoglu to take the center seat, and Tom Goltz to join him. It is my understanding that Mr. Goltz will be translating for him.

Mr. Ibisoglu was born in Varna, Bulgaria in 1943. He served in the Bulgarian military from 1963 to 1965. His elementary education was in Turkish-language schools and his vocational training was in agricultural management.

From 1973 to 1984, Mr. Ibisoglu was a secretary in the Medovets village Communist Party organization. He served two terms as an elected member of the Bulgarian National Assembly, from 1976 to 1986.

In January 1985, during the name-changing campaign in Bulgaria, he was forced to change his name from Halil Ahmedov Ibisev Ibisoglu—I have an awful time with that name, as you can tell. It makes me more sympathetic to those people that have trouble with Steny, I want you to know that. He was forced to change his name to Lubomir Alekseev Avdjiev.

He fled to Turkey via Yugoslavia in August 1986 and has changed his name to the traditional Turkish. He is married and has three children.

I will introduce Mr. Goltz later. Suffice it to say he is a reporter and writer and has worked steadfastly on this particular issue, particularly as it relates to his work for Reader's Digest.

I want to thank both of these gentlemen for taking the time to meet with me recently in November when I was in Istanbul, and to thank them very much for joining us again today.

We thank you for being with us and turn over the microphone to you.

STATEMENT OF HALIL IBISOGLU

Mr. Ibisoglu [through interpreter]. Esteemed members of the Helsinki Commission, thank you so much for inviting me here today. I am extremely excited and grateful for the opportunity to be here.

I have come here to explain the plight of my kinsmen in Bulgaria, after having traveled 8,000 kilometers from Turkey to America to do this.

The state of my kinsmen in Bulgaria is indeed extremely dire.

I wish to take this opportunity to ask you to actively support passage of H.J. Res. 262 and S.J. Res. 126 condemning the brutal treatment of the Turkish minority by the Bulgarian Government. Your support will clearly convey to the Bulgarian Government the deep concern of the U.S. Congress about the fate and the future of the Turks in Bulgaria.

In order not to take too much of your valuable time, I presented my testimony in English to the scribes, in addition to a list of 106 captives[1] in Bulgaria, mainly children and some wives, of whom 17 have been allowed to come to Turkey up until this date. This list is as of 31 December 1986.

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[1] H.I. uses Turkish word "Reghin," or "captive" referring to the family members of ethnic Turks who fled Bulgaria, and have sued for reunification via the Turkish Foreign Ministry. Thus, although H.I. uses word "captive," it is not entirely accurate. T.C.G.

Chairman **Hoyer**. At this time, without objection, a copy of your English translation testimony will be included in the record, along with the list of captives.

[The document referred to follows.]

TESTIMONY OF HALIL IBISOGLU
Before the U.S. Commission on Security & Cooperation in Europe
Washington, D.C.
February 3, 1987

I am honored to testify before the U.S. Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which monitors the Helsinki Accords and in this context follows cases of violations of human rights in Eastern Europe. I wish to discuss with its esteemed members the present situation of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria which is subjected to inhumane persecution and assimilation policies.

Why did I flee from Bulgaria? For many years, the Bulgarian regime has systematically been taking various measures to obliterate the national, cultural, and religious identity of more than one and a half million Turks in Bulgaria. First, Turkish religious schools were abolished. Then, the Turkish schools were merged with the Bulgarian schools. Later on, Turkish language classes were totally eliminated. The forced Bulgarization of the Turkish minority started in December, 1984 in the Province of Kurdzhali. This campaign was conducted at gun-point. I have learned from very reliable sources that there have been many incidents of murder, exile, and imprisonment.

As a member of the Bulgarian National Assembly, I requested documentation of the decision of the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee on the Bulgarization issue from the Party and the police. In response, I was told this decision was not documented and that I should not persist in requesting the document. Otherwise, they told me my life would be in jeopardy, noting that I was young and had children. They added that those who opposed the decision of the Party would be murdered or imprisoned. The civil police then attempted to accuse me without specifying an actionable offense. The police wanted to imprison me for setting up a protest meeting which was organized by the Turkish minority.

In January, 1985, the Bulgarian authorities forced me to change may name to Lubomir Alekseev Avdjiev. I subsequently was asked to make a presentation on television declaring that we, members of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, had changed our names voluntarily and that we were originally Bulgarians. I refused to make this declaration. This time, the civil police asked me to help them. They wanted me to continuously report to them the private communications and actions of my Turkish brothers. I did not accept this either.

The Bulgarian authorities later summoned Assembly members of Turkish origin, as well as teachers, physicians, journalists, famous athletes, certain muftis, and intellectuals of the Turkish community. The authorities read a protest letter addressed to Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal which they forced us to sign.

Prior to this, an official from the Varna District Committee had given me a serious threat. He warned that if I opposed the decisions of the Party I would not only lose my membership in the Assembly, but also would never be able to see my spouse and children. I signed the letter along with the others because of fear of losing my family. The letter stated that we changed our names voluntarily and we were converted Bulgarians, and that Turkey should not interfere with our internal affairs. They also summoned the Turkish intellectuals in Varna and made them sign a similar declaration. Furthermore, intellectuals of Turkish origin were forced to make similar declarations at meetings and workplaces, before workers and students, in journals and magazines, and on television and radio. Those who failed to comply with these orders were dismissed from their jobs, imprisoned, and exiled. Some of them were murdered.

Turkish teachers in Turkish villages were replaced by Bulgarian teachers who were also acting as police agents. They closely monitor the Turkish minority and report to the police.

The Bulgarians forcibly impose their own policies while publicly describing compliance as voluntary. Since I had witnessed the facts and truth, I could not stand this oppression. Hence, in order to be able to openly express the plight of the 1.5 million Turkish minority, I left Bulgaria for my Motherland, Turkey.

In Bulgaria, Turks are usually employed in the harshest jobs such as building and road construction, agriculture and forestry, manufacturing of toxic materials, etc. When drafted, Turkish youth are employed as labor soldiers (trudovak) and they perform the hardest jobs. Turkish young men are not allowed to join the army as officers. There are no Turkish employees at security and police offices. There are very few, if any, Turkish students at the universities.

During the forced name-changing campaign, villages populated by the Turkish minority were surrounded by the military and police forces, including tanks, military, and fire vehicles. Nobody was allowed to move around. The military and the police monitored telephone conversations. A number of Turkish families were relocated to areas densely populated by Bulgarians. Circumcision was banned. Circumcisers, as well as many parents of circumcised children, were imprisoned.

Speaking Turkish is strictly forbidden. A fine is imposed on individuals who address each other by their Turkish names. Even singing in Turkish or singing Turkish folk songs is forbidden. Radio broadcasts in Turkish are terminated. It is even forbidden to listen to the Turkish radio or to read Turkish books and magazines. Moreover, publishing in the Turkish language is not allowed. Any kind of communication with relatives in Turkey is forbidden. Those who want to emigrate to Turkey are not permitted to do so. Mosques in most places are demolished and tombstones are obliterated. Funeral ceremonies according to Islamic practices are banned. Muslim-Turks are buried in the same cemetaries as Bulgarians.

Although many Bulgarians are against this policy of oppression and ethnic persecution, they cannot speak up for fear of being punished. The reason the Bulgarian government does not allow the foreign press to visit Turkish villages is because it does not want the truth to be revealed. The main reason behind the gun-point Bulgarization of the Turkish minority is to stop the rapid population growth among the Turkish minority because the growth rate among Bulgarians has stabilized. The Bulgarians fear the possiblility of becoming a minority in the course of time. The annual population growth rate among the Turks is about two percent.

The Turkish minority in Bulgaria seeks help from countries of the Free World, especially from the U.S. The only possible way to free those people from Bulgarian cruelty is to put heavy pressure on the Bulgarians to respect human rights and to secure the right of the Turkish minority to emigrate to Turkey.

The Bulgarian Government is undoubtedly hoping this issue will be forgotten. Therefore, we should continue to put the Bulgarian regime under pressure until it reevaluates its present position and begins to seek the solution of the problem.

While I am certain the U.S. Administration and the Congress support efforts to help the Turks in Bulgaria, much more can be done in the critical period ahead. Congressional advocacy on behalf of the Bulgarian Turks can make the critical difference in one person's life. This advocacy can take the form of letters and resolutions, as well as public statements and actions.

I wish to take this opportunity to ask you to actively support passage of House Joint Resolution 262 and Senate Joint Resolution 126 condemning the brutal treatment of the Turkish minority by the Bulgarian Government. Your support will clearly convey to the Bulgarian Government the deep concern of the U.S. Congress about the fate and future of the Turks in Bulgaria.

Thank you.

November 12, 1986

An open letter adressed to the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Turgut Ozal, containing the alleged statements of a group of Turkish Ethnic people was published in Sofia in November 27, 1985. The letter expressed the contentment of this group of people for being Bulgarian and living in Bulgaria.

Among the cosigners of the letter was Mr. Lubomir Aleksiyev (originally Mr. Halil Ahmedov Ibisev) who later (summer 1986) emigrated to Turkey recently made a statement explaining the conditions under which the published letter was signed. English translation of the hand-written original copy of the above-mentioned statement is attached herewith.

I do not remember the exact date. It was in October 1985. I was asked by telephone from Varna District Commitee to join a meeting of the National Soviet of the Fatherland Front in Sofia the following day, at 10 o'clock. When I went to the meeting, I saw about fifty other Turks in the hall. I asked my friends the reason why we were gathered here but they did not know it either.

After some time, Fahrettin Halilov (Kamen Kalinov) came and took the floor. He declared that they had written a message addressed to the Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal which he would read and he said that everybody would sign it afterwards. In the letter, it was written that we had voluntarily changed our names, that we believed ourselves to be originally Bulgarians and we were happy to live in Bulgaria, that Turks should deal with their own affairs and not interfere with our internal affairs.

As the message was read and opened to signature, some of us hesitated to sign it. However, at the end, unwillingly, we signed it all. I thought that, if I did not sign this letter, the Turkish Minority I represented would be in a difficult situation and be subjected to torture and that something might also happen to my dearest wife and children. So I was obliged to sign it under the name of Lubomir Aleksiev. Sometime ago, someone from the Varna District Committee had threatened me that if I resisted the instructions of the party, my membership of the Parliament would fall and that I would not see my wife and children anymore.

There were some ten other names under the message who could not attend the meeting due to various reasons. It was said that those persons would sign the message later.

The people who attended this meeting signed the message under pressure.

Halil Ahmedov Ibishev

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

PRESS - RELEASE

11 East 84th Street
New York, N. Y. 10028

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF TURKEY

The Bulgarian daily Otechestven Front published an open letter from a group of Bulgarians, who have restored their Bulgarian names, to the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Turgut Ozal. Follows the text of the open letter:

"To the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

Mr. Turgut Ozal,

We protest most energetically against the systematic attempts that you, in your capacity as Prime Minister of Turkey, have been making to interfere in the internal affairs of our motherland, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, and in our affairs as Bulgarians who have restored their Bulgarian names. As Prime Minister, you have indisputably the right - we would say the moral obligation indeed - to speak about and concern yourself with the situation of the citizens of Turkey, but you have no right to speak on our behalf, trying to convert us into tools of your selfish speculations and political games.

You have taken the liberty of violating elementary political ethics by leveling most flagrantly unwarranted accusations and uttering bellicose threats against the peace-loving Bulgarian people.

We are indignant at your attempts to justify all this before the highly responsible forum of the General Assembly of the United Nations and other forums by referring to non-existant clauses of bilateral and multilateral treaties. You are aware, no doubt, that treaties which allow you to intervene in our foreign affairs do not and cannot exist.

You, Mr. Prime Minister, and some of your ministers and officials have spoken in other forums as well on issues which are of the exclusive competence of the Bulgarian citizens, and then have alleged before your own people that your slanders against Bulgaria enjoy international support. But who has supported you in these attempts and when? Why do you lie to your own people? Do you think that such lies will succeed?

We know the Turkish people very well. We have lived next to each other for centuries. The Turkish people of today are politically mature. You can fool them only for awhile. But, sooner or later, the Turkish people will sure call you to account for that.

We are convinced that your actions will go down in the history of the Republic of Turkey as a most blatant provocation against the Bulgarian people and against the people of the Republic of Turkey, who have demonstrated that they can live in peace and goodneighbourliness. These actions, Mr. Ozal, are a noisy demonstration of jingoistic sentiments and aspirations. By what right do Turkish officials circulate among the Moslem countries a map fabricated in Turkey, according to which two thirds of Bulgaria's territory (including our places of reverence Batak and Perushtitsa, as well as the ancient Bulgarian capitals Pliska and Preslav) are represented as lands inhabited by non-Bulgarian population? Is this not an expression of your imperial ambitions and intentions vis-a-vis our motherland? Your behaviour reminds us of the pompous arrogance of an Ottoman vezier, but this past has long since become history.

You and your followers are trying to disguise your chauvinistic claims under the veil of concern for the rights of Moslems in Bulgaria. There is no unbiased politician in the world who, having visited the People's Republic of Bulgaria, has not seen with his own eyes and has not praised the freedoms enjoyed by all religious denominations in our country. You are well aware of this truth. You are trying, however, to insinuate another idea which makes us state categorically: the fact that some of us are of the Moslem faith is no reason to regard us as Turks. By what right do you mix together the religious and the national feelings of Bulgarians who profess the Islamic creed? Your attempt to pose as a spokesman of the Moslems in Bulgaria, as the sole spokesman of the entire Islamic world is ridiculous and outrageous. You must remember that no Bulgarian citizen, either atheist, Christian or Moslem, has fallen into such a predicament as to need your concern and protection.

Being a political personality, Mr. Ozal, you must very well know that such attempts and poses are in gross contravention of the Turkish Constitution as well. On its very first page it is written black on white that Turkish citizens exist in "integral unity with the Turkish State" alone and that no ideas can violate the principle of separation which stipulates that "religion should not interfere with the affairs of the State".

We wish to ask you: what link can exist between the Moslem citizens of Bulgaria and the Turkish State to allow you to arrogate to yourself the right to speak on their behalf? As far as we know, you have not been proclaimed a caliph of the world's Moslems so that you can look upon the Moslems in our country as your flock.

Since you are fond of asking questions at various international forums, would you like to tell us what has happened to the thousands of Bulgarians living in Turkey? What is the fate of the Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians, Albanians and others in your country? How is their ethnic survival made compatible with Article 66 of the Turkish Constitution, which says that every subject of the Republic of Turkey is a Turk, and with the 1934 Act on the mandatory change of family names, which compels each citizen of Turkey to adopt a family appellation regardless of his or her ethnic origin?

Why are you, Mr. Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, avoiding persistently in your statements to speak about the situation of human rights and of nationalities in your country? You are silent on the five million unemployed and the millions of Turkish citizens which have been driven away from their homes into making a living with their families abroad. You make no mention of millions of Turkish young men and women who are denied the right and the opportunity to education and self-realization. And what about the Kurdish children who are doomed to illiteracy and misery? Perhaps what you should worry about and show concern for is the human rights of the Turkish citizens. Will you agree that it is awkward for you and for the rulers of the Turkish people that on the same day that you have dared to slander our country and its citizens, on that very day the European Parliament condemned once again Turkey for the lack of most elementary democracy and the suppression of fundamental human freedoms.

It is hardly sensible to peep into your neigbour's backyard, when your own house is on fire.

We, the Bulgarians who have restored their Bulgarian names, need no answers to questions which are own concern. These matters are obvious to us and we have resolved them once and for all.

We hope that you, Mr. Ozal, still have the opportunity to appraise soberly in your capacity as Prime Minister your actions heretofore and to draw the necessary conclusions in the name of goodneighbourliness and cooperation between our countries and peoples.

KAMEN KALINOV, Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Member of the People's Assembly, Editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Nova Svetlina", honoured cultural worker, Ph.D. in history.

NADJA ASPARUHOVA, Candidate Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Member of the Council of State, Secretary of the Kurdjali District Committee of the BCP.

ALEXANDER KOLEV, Candidate Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Ph.D. in phisophy.

BLAGA TATAROVA, Candidate Member of the Central Committee of the BCP, Member of the Bureau of the Nationa Committee for the Defence of Peace, Member of the Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement, Ph.D. in history.

ORLIN ZAGOROV, Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of Cultural Treasures in Bulgaria, Member of the Committee of Culture, Ph.D. in philosophy.

RADI SEMOV, Member of the Central Commission for Control and Revision of the BCP, Secretary of the Kurdjali District Committee of the BCP, Ph.D.

CHRISTO MARINOV, Member of the People's Assembly, Secretary of the National Council of the Fatherland Front.

RADUL CHAVDAROV, Secretary of the Cental Committee of the Dimitrov Communist Youth Lague.

NIKOLAI ANTONOV, Secretacy of the Shumen District Committee of the BCP.

RADUL CHAVDAROV, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Dimitrov Communist Youth League,

ASSEN SEVARSKI, Member of the Union of Bulgarian Writers, poet, deputy editor-in-chief of the magazine "Nov Zhivot", honoured cultural worker.

ZARKO HRANOV, Member of the National Council and Chairman of the Kurdjali District Committee of the Fatherland Front,

SVETLANA DILOVA, Candidate Member of the Central Committee of the BCP, Member of the Bureau of the Shumen District Council of the Bulgarian Women's Movement,

YULIA PIRINSKA, Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Trade Unions, Chairman of the Rasgrad District Council of the BTU,

ALLEN ARNAUDOV, Deputy Head of Department in the National Council of the Fatherland Front,

ALDEMIR SIDEROV, Professor in the Sofia University "Kliment Ohridsky", Ph.D. in history,

NAUM SHALAMANOV, twice world weightlifting champion, honoured master of sports,

MIHAIL YANCHEV, Member of the Union of Translators, journalist, lecturer in the Sofia University "Kliment Ohridsky",

~~MIRYAN TOPCHIEV,~~ Chief Mufti,

ANDREY ANDREEV, journalist, member of the editorial board and head of department in the newspaper "Nova Svetlina", Ph.D. in history,

MARIN KOLAROV, Secretary of the Turgovishte District Committee of the BCP,

YULIANA CHRISTOVA, Member of the People's Assembly, political activist, student in the Sofia University "Kliment Ohridsky",

SABOTIN TASEV, programme editor in the Bulgarian Television,

VLADIMIR FERADOV, veteran political activist in Sofia, DELYAN TETEV, Member of the National Council of the Fatherland Front,

ANTON ILIYANOV, member of the editorial board and head of department in the newspaper "Nova Svetlina",

APOSTOL ORLINOV, Secretary of the Turgovishte District Committee of the Fatherland Front,

SUBIN SHTEREV, honoured master of sports, head coach for wrestling in the Turgovishte District Council of the Bulgarian Union for Physical Education and Sports,

SVETLANA YOSIFOVA, political activist in Popovo,

BORIL KOSEV, hero of socialist labour, head of the Venetz agro-industrial complex,

BORYANA RAFAILOVA, district counsellor, foreman in the Shumen tobacco plant "Partisanka", winner of the Gold Order of Labour,

EMIL DEMIREV, Shemen District mufti,

DEYAN CHAUSHEV, engineer, Secretary of the Silistra District Committee of the BCP, district counsellor,

SABINA MARINOVA, hero of socialist labour, worker in the Silistra factory "Dobrudja", Member of the Silistra District Committee of the BCP,

~~RADI DEYANOV, Vice-Chairman of the~~ Glavinitsa city council for culture,

ANETA ASSENOVA, Member of the National Council of the Fatherland Front, Secretary of the Ruen city committee of the Fatherland Front,

SYDER HADJIEV, Burgas District Mufti in Aitos,

ULYANA KIROVA, Member of the Tolbuhin District Committee of the BCP, Secretary of the BCP Committee of the Grain and Feed Plant in Tolbuhin, district counsellor, winner of Gold Order of the People's Republic of Bulgaria,

SERGEI RADOMIROV, Chief Physician of the Tervel District Hospital, honoured physician,

HUBEN HUBENOV, Tolbuhin District mufti,

SUBI HADJIEV, Haskovo political activist,

CHRISTO NIKOV, Member of the Bureau of the Kotel City Committee of the BCP, Chairman of the City Committee of the Fatherland Front,

LUBOMIR ALEXIEV, Member of the People's Assembly, head of agricultural brigade in Medovets, Varna District,

SOKOL HUBENOV, worker of the Record Plant in Plovdiv,

CHAVDAR KURDOV, Plovdiv District mufti and acting Kurdjali District mufti,

ANATOLY RAFAELOV, Director General of the Suhindol plant in the Veliko Turnovo District, city council counsellor, member of the City Council of the Fatherland Front, Chairman of the Sports Club "Losen",

CHRISTOMIR MIHAILOV, ballet master of the Russe National Opera,

EMILIA KOVACHEVA, hero of socialist labour, winner of the Dimitrov Award, former worker of the Russe plant "Dunavska Koprina",

LUDMIL ANASTASOV, hero of socialist labour, honoured master of sports, world wrestling champion,

~~ANDREY RADOSLAVOV, hero~~ of socialist labour, head of agricultural bridage in Trapishte, Rasgrad District,

ILIYA GEORGIEV, Rasgrad District mufti,

ZINA TIHANOVA, honoured teacher, teacher in the Vasil Kolarov High School in Rasgrad, political activist,

SANYA DERVISHEVA, political activist in Pleven, widow of a BCP functionary killed in the anti-fascist struggle,

MARINA ZARKOVA, political activist, deputy head of department in the newspaper "Nova Svetlina",

EMILIYA GAVAZOVA, Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Teachers Union, deputy principal of a public school in Mlechino, Kurdjali District, MARTIN KAMENOV, hero of socialist labour, head of the construction brigade "Georgi Ivanov" in Kurdjali,

ANDREY VIDENOV, head of tobacco brigade in Boyno, Kurdjali District,

MARIN RAICHEV, head of a mining brigade in the Zvezdel Mine, Kurdjali District, winner of the Order of Georgi Dimitrov,

SABI SHTEREV, Secretary of the Mayor's office and secretary of the BCP organization in Turnovtsa, Turgovishte District,

FELINA ARSOVA, Mayor of Kus, Shumen District,

ANNA MARINOVA, acrobatics coach of the Gabrovo Sports Club,

NELI DERVISHEVA, teacher of the P. Yavorov High School in Pleven, daughter of a BCP functionary killed in the anti-fascist struggle.

List of children and spouses for whom applications for family reunification were submitted by families residing in Turkey and transmitted to the Bulgarian Government. (as of 31 December 1986)

Name of persons in favour of whom applications were submitted for family reunification in Turkey	Age	Relation with the applicants	Domicile in Bulgaria
1. Ulgen Nervinov Huseyinov	4	son	Sumen
2. Ahmet Nervinov Huseyinov	7	son	Sumen
3. Ertan Saffetov Halilov	12	son	Asenovgrad
4. Levent Saffetov Halilov	5	son	Asenovgrad
5. Nermin Mehmedova Fazlıeva	12	daughter	Silistra
6. Şermin Mehmedova Fazlıeva	8	daughter	Silistra
7. Lutfiye Bekirova Kasımova	20	daughter	Varna
8. Mumin Sabriev Karahasanov	15	son	Asenovgrad
9. Bahriye Muminova Muminova	27	son	Kardzali
10. Yılmaz Muminov Muminov	24	son	Kardzali
11. Belgin Ismetova	19	daughter	Haskovo·
12. Ayla	10	daughter	Razgrad·
13. Semra	13	daughter	Razgrad
14. Meliha Halilova Sarıkovanlık	24	daughter	Varna
15. Ilhan Hakkıev Recepov	19	son	Sumen
16. Rafi Rustuev Rafiev	8	son	Sumen
17. Nilufer Fikretova Mustafaova	10	daughter	Sumen
18. Hulya Ibrahimova Kamberova	14	daughter	Sumen
19. Burcin Ibrahimova Kamberova	12	daughter	Sumen
20. Şukru Halimova Kemalov	5	son	Asenovgrad
21. Aysel Salihova	16	daughter	Sliven

Name of persons in favour of whom applications were submitted for family reunification in Turkey	Age	Relation with the applicants	Domicile in Bulgaria
22. Selime Faikova Alieva	12	son	Sumen
23. Nurhan Sabriev Solakov	12	son	Razgrad
24. Erol Saliev Cesliev	8	son	Plovdiv
25. Emel Salieva Ceslieva	6	daughter	Plovdiv
26. Deniz Sezaiev Zeynelov	5	son	Ruse
27. Urke Huseyinov Ahmedov	--	son	Sumen
28. Gunes Yasaralieva Tahirova	3	daughter	Sofia
29. Husmen Ibrahimov Mehmedov	14	son	Tolbuhin
30. Hacer Osmanova Aliosmanova	7	daughter	Burgas
31. Orhan Hidayetov Ademov	19	son	Razgrad
32. Ayse Hidayetova Ademova	12	daughter	Razgrad
33. Bedriye Osmanova Salimova	--	wife	Razgrad
34. Belgin Samiev Basriev	10	son	Razgrad
35. Belgin Samieva Basrieva	4	daughter	Razgrad
36. Mumin Muminov Mehmedov	9	son	Asenovgrad
37. Tevfik Muminov Mehmedov	7	son	Asenovgrad
38. Bulent Ahmedov Seyidov	12	son	Asenovgrad
39. Fikret Ahmedov Seyidov	9	son	Asenovgrad
40. Zelihe Durmusalieva Durmusov	16	daughter	Plovdiv
41. Nalyan Durmusalieva Durmusova	13	daughter	Plovdiv
42. Nurgul Durmusalieva Durmusova	7	daughter	Plovdiv
43. Ramadan Semsettin Rustemov	20	son	Asenovgrad
44. Nedred Semsettineva Rustemova	18	daughter	Asenovgrad
45. Sevda Semsettineva Rustemova	11	daughter	Asenovgrad
46. Fatma Ilyasova Omerova	--	daughter	Asenovgrad

Name of persons in favour of whom applications were submitted for family reunification in Turkey	Age	Relation with the applicants	Domicile in Bulgaria
47. Aydın Ilyasov Omerov	--	son	Asenovgrad
48. Gulercan Necatova Mustafaova	5	daughter	Kardzali
49. Niyazi Necatov Mustafov	4	son	Kardzali
50. Hacer Resinova Mehmedova	7	daughter	Burgas
51. Erman Mustafaov Huseyinov	4	son	Sliven
52. Zekim Yusufov Ahmedov	19	son	Targoviste
53. Bedriye Salimova Latifova	18	daughter	Plovdiv
54. Necmettin Mustafaov Behcedov	13	son	Burgas
55. Evgin Ismetov Karamahmutov	8	son	Asenovgrad
56. Aydın Nazmiev Ramadanov	8	son	Haskovo
57. Samit Yılmazov Ahmedov	7	son	Asenovgrad
58. Cuneyt Recepov	--	son	Plovdiv
59. Mehmet Sukruev Alimollaov	18	son	Burgas
60. Benide Zulkufova Yusufova	14	daughter	Sumen
61. Guler Sakirova Mehmetova	28	wife	Haskovo
62. Orhan Mehmedov Mustafaov	8	son	Haskovo
63. Leyla Eminova Erecebova	27	wife	Plovdiv
64. Narin Velieva Erecebova	6	daughter	Plovdiv
65. Fatma Rasimov Mehmedova	19	daughter	Razgrad
66. Rahmi Rasimov Mehmedov	18	son	Razgrad
67. Korman Necatiev Muminov	6	son	Sofia
68. Ahmet Recebov Ahmedov	8	son	Sumen
69. Urkiye Ademova Huseyinova	28	wife	Sumen
70. Emine Halilova Hasanova	8	daughter	Kardzali
71. Cemile Halilova Hasanova	28	wife	Kardzali

Name of persons in favour of whom applications were submitted for family reunification in Turkey	Age	Relation with the applicants	Domicile in Bulgaria
72. Fehime Yasarova Hasanova	28	wife	Kardzali
73. Gulden Omerova Huseyinova	6	daughter	Haskovo
74. Ayse Muharremova Selimova	23	wife	Haskovo
75. Altınay Rahimova Recebova	18	daughter	Smoljan
76. Mariya Recebova	--	wife	Smoljan
77. Beytullah Mehmedov Beytullov	2	son	Burgas
78. Zehra Ahmedov Ismailova	21	wife	Burgas
79. Taliye Ilyasova Huseyinova	38	wife	Sumen
80. Aysel Niyazieva Mustafaova	13	daughter	Vetovo
81. Birsen Niyazieva	21	daughter	Vetovo
82. Ayse Ahmedova Karasalıeva	38	wife	Vetovo
83. Sebaydin Kadirov Hakkıev	9	son	Sumen
84. Seniha Kadirova Hakkıeva	7	daughter	Sumen
85. Fikriye Salimova Huseyinova	28	wife	Sumen
86. Guleycan Celalova Hasanova	6	daughter	Stara Zagora
87. Sever Ramadanov Hasanov	8	son	Haskovo
88. Hasan Ramadanov Hasanov	3	son	Haskovo
89. Selver Ramadanova Hasanova	6	daughter	Haskovo
90. Gulten Nurieva Hasanova	26	wife	Haskovo
91. Ercan Ramadanov Ismailov	6	son	Kardzali
92. Fatma Ademova Ismailova	24	wife	Kardzali
93. Metin Mehmedov Condolov	9	son	Haskovo
94. Kaniye Mehmedova Condolova	11	daughter	Haskovo
95. Sirin Hikmetova Tahirova	5	daughter	Asenovgrad
96. Gulten Sabahattinova Idrisova	12	daughter	Asenovgrad

Name of persons in favour of whom applications were submitted for family reunification in Turkey	Age	Relation with the applicants	Domicile in Bulgaria
97. Afki Sabahattinov Idrisov	11	son	Asenovgrad
98. Aynur Halilova Palova	22	daughter	Asenovgrad
99. Elmas Halilova Palova	20	daughter	Asenovgrad
100. Nevzat Recepov Recepov	15	son	Sumen
101. Hüseyin Seyfittinov Yakupov	5	son	Kardzali
102. Rasim Mehmedov Necibov	--	husband	Razgrad
103. Aydın Musov Ahmedov	17	son	Haskovo
104. Ayten Kazımova Hayrulova	--	daughter	Kardzali
105. Hakan Ahmedov Omerov	6	son	Varna
106. Melike Ahmedova Omerova	3	daughter	Varna
107. Ahmet Omerov Ismailov	41	husband	Varna
108. Ayse Rasitova Omerova	19	daughter	Haskovo
109. Cengiz Rasitov Omerov	18	son	Haskovo
110. Rasit Huseyinov Omerov	--	husband	Haskovo
111. Tamer Necdetov Kasabov	18	son	Kardzali
112. Necdet Suleymanov Kasabov	38	husband	Kardzali
113. Selver Kadirova Mehmeteminova	28	wife	Haskovo
114. Emin Mehmet Eminov	7	son	Haskovo
115. Erhan Mehmet Eminov	5	son	Haskovo
116. Hüseyin Mehmedov Ibisev	36	husband	Varna

List of children who have arrived from Bulgaria to join their families residing in Turkey (as of 31 December 1986)

Name of children who have joined their families in Turkey	Age
1. Sule Sevkieva Yunusova	8
2. Tasim Bahcedov Tasimov	12
3. Necla Behcedova Tasimova	10
4. Bülent Sinasi Huseyinov	12
5. Umit Sinasi Huseyinov	14
6. Hatice Ahmedova Hasanova	11
7. Sevdiye Yunusova	14
8. Sevcan Yunusova	12
9. Gunay Aleytinov Yunusov	7
10. Zeynep Galipova	6
11. Zehra Turkay	6
12. Bırgul Mehmedova	11
13. Emine Mustafaova Idrisova	12
14. Evsin Mustafaov Idrisov	10
15. Nermin Mehmedova Fazlıova	12
16. Sermin Mehmedova Fazlıova	8
17. Korman Necatiev Muminov	6

Mr. Ibisoglu [through interpreter]. I was an eyewitness to all of the events in Bulgaria, and as a result I will answer any and all questions that you choose to ask me.

Chairman Hoyer. All right. Thank you very much, again, for your testimony, which I have read and I found to be compelling. I want to ask a couple of questions.

Before doing so, I would observe that the resolution of which you spoke earlier in your testimony, I and a number of other members of the Commission were co-sponsors of it, and we expect that to be reintroduced this year.

[Interpreted.]

Now, in your testimony you mention that the main reason behind the forced assimilation of the Turkish minority is to stop their rapid population growth.

[Interpreted.]

My question is: Do you see this as the sole reason, or are there other reasons that might account for the Bulgarian Government's campaign?

[Interpreted.]

Mr. Ibisoglu [through interpreter]. This is not an entirely new thing. The idea of assimilating the minorities in Bulgaria has been going on for some time in Bulgaria.

I think that it has been planned for some time, this campaign that began in 1984 and 1985, and the primary, if not sole reason behind it was the rapidly rising numbers of Turks and the fact that the Bulgarians, as an ethnic group themselves, are becoming old due to a lack of births among the Bulgarians.

And it is my considered opinion, as well, that the main fear of the Bulgarians is that with increasing numbers, the Turks might sue for autonomy someday or possibly even a separate state within the context of Bulgaria.

Chairman Hoyer. Late last year we heard of riots in Kazakistan in the Soviet Union which seemed to be instigated by a nationalist feeling.

[Interpreted.]

I am going to get you a copy of these questions, so it may be a little easier for you.

We also know that the Moslem population of the Soviet Union is growing at 2½ times the rate of the Slavic nationalities. I believe Ambassador Schifter referred to that general proposition.

[Interpreted.]

So that the fear apparently that the Bulgarians have is shared by the Soviet Union.

[Interpreted.]

Now my question: From your perspective, is there a strong nationalist feeling among the Turks of Bulgaria which could be provoking a repressive reaction from the Bulgarian Government?

In other words, have the Turks, from your perspective, done anything to engender the repressive action of the Bulgarian Government?

[Interpreted.]

Mr. Ibisoglu [through interpreter]. First, I would like to say a few words about the situation in Bulgaria, because that is more important and more familiar to me.

The Turks have cleaved to their religious customs and ways for a long time, but since the campaign began, of course, all of these things were forbidden.

In respect to the situation in Kazakistan, if the world had not been made aware of the plight of the Muslim Turkish minority in Bulgaria, there is no telling what might have happened to those individuals in Kazakistan.

Chairman HOYER. Let me go back to his observation that the Turks have cleaved, held to their cultural, religious backgrounds. That, of course, is guaranteed under the Helsinki Final Act, the right to do that.

Other than that, have there been any nationalist demonstrations, any nationalist writings, any genesis of a fear or something that would create a fear by the Bulgarian Government that the Turks are, in effect, trying to overthrow the Government, trying to change the Government in some way, which would explain the actions of the Bulgarian Government?

That is really the point I am trying to get at.

[Interpreted.]

I have a lot of staff helping me, as well. They are all here to help me, so you and I are in the same boat.

[Interpreted.]

Mr. IBISOGLU [through interpreter]. No, again, I feel that the fear of the Bulgarian Government is predicated on the idea of a rising Turkish population that may one day unify itself. But in terms of any sort of nationalistic or religious movement prior to the beginning of the campaign, there was not such a thing.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you.

The last question I would like to ask, Mr. Ibisoglu, is related to the announcement that there is no longer a Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

Now, you were a member of the National Parliament for 10 years, elected as a Bulgarian, elected as a member of the Communist Party.

Is it your observation that that is true? Has the assimilation been effective? In other words, have the 900,000 plus maybe as many as 1 million or more, adopted the premise that they are now no longer Turkish Bulgarians but in fact Bulgarians without any ethnic or cultural heritage?

[Interpreted.]

Mr. IBISOGLU [through interpreter]. No, the Turks did not accept the new names, or rather, they did not accept their Bulgarization at all. But unhappily, they had no choice but to accept the new names. Conditions were such that anywhere there were concentrations of Turks, the Government would send in troops and soldiers and police to control the situation and force the people to accept their newly assigned names.

Chairman HOYER. I said that was my last question, however, it is not.

What about the possibility of emigration? Is there a desire among a large portion of the Turkish Bulgarian population to emigrate? And if there is, is that allowed? Is it practical to think of such alternative?

[Interpreted.]

Mr. IBISOGLU [through interpreter]. The desire amongst my kinsmen in Bulgaria to emigrate has been there for a long time, but it has always been restricted and now it is completely forbidden.

If the doors were to be thrown open, in my opinion, not one Turk would remain in Bulgaria.

Chairman HOYER. Let me ask, then, a follow-up question.

Again from your perspective as a member of the Bulgarian Parliament, if the fear is the growing Turkish minority, why then would not a rational government response be to allow all of the Turks to emigrate, if in fact the end result would be that the remaining Turkish Bulgarians would be zero? Wouldn't that in and of itself accomplish the Bulgarian end?

[Interpreted.]

Mr. IBISOGLU [through interpreter]. The basic reason why the Bulgarians don't want the Turks to migrate is that they are all in essential industries and in labor intensive things, like agriculture and working in factories. If all the Turks were to migrate at once from Bulgaria to Turkey, there would be very little left of the Bulgarian economy.

Chairman HOYER. Mr. Ibisoglu, you have been very helpful. We again appreciate your joining us—and sharing your personal experiences with us.

[Interpreted.]

We want to assure you that we intend to continue to focus on this issue.

[Interpreted.]

I would now like to again introduce the gentleman who has been the interpreter, who will now be our witness, Thomas Caufield Goltz.

Mr. Goltz was born in Tokyo in 1954, raised in Fargo, ND. He attended Columbia University from which he received his B.A. in German and Arabic and his M.A. in Modern Middle Eastern Studies.

Mr. GOLTZ. Both of those are NYU, please.

Chairman HOYER. Both NYU degrees, excuse me.

He has worked as a correspondent for AP, UPI and many newspapers and magazines in North America and Europe, including the Toronto Star, the Christian Science Monitor, Reader's Digest, the Middle East Economic Digest, Middle East, and various magazines in Turkey itself.

Presently he is working for McGraw-Hill Publishers and is living in Ankara. His most recent article on the Bulgarian assimilation campaign against the ethnic Turkish minority will appear in Reader's Digest in the spring of this year.

Again, I would observe that Mr. Goltz was kind enough to meet with me and members of the Commission staff in Instanbul to discuss his insights into the issue that is the subject matter of this hearing—that is, the treatment of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria—and we very much appreciate his being here.

Before, Mr. Goltz, however, asking you to proceed, I would like to introduce from the State of New Jersey, Congressman Chris Smith.

Congressman Smith has been one of the more faithful members of this Commission, very interested in human rights adherence, and is very active in all of the congressional efforts in whatever forum to protect those rights. We are very pleased to have him as a member of the Commission.

Chris, would you like to say anything before I recognize Mr. Goltz?

STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. SMITH. Thank you for those kind statements, Mr. Chairman. You certainly have done an outstanding job as Chairman of the Helsinki Commission.

I have been on this now for three terms. You have had a very diversified agenda and have sought to pursue human rights and the protection and preservation of human rights wherever and whenever they are threatened.

To my knowledge, this is the first time we have had a hearing on Bulgaria, and I think it is timely and will be most insightful.

I have read a few books myself about some of the punishment and torture that occurs in Bulgarian prisons, particularly for people who are believers, and the prejudice that is being exhibited against the Turkish minority certainly is a very prime and important issue for this Commission to study, and I appreciate your recognizing it is important.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you.

Mr. Goltz.

STATEMENT OF THOMAS CAUFIELD GOLTZ

Mr. GOLTZ. Thank you very much.

There is little I can add to Mr. Ibisoglu's moving account of the plight of the ethnic Turkish minority in Bulgaria, as I have never been there before.

After this testimony, it is unlikely that I will be welcomed in Bulgaria any time in the near future.

The reason for the reluctance on the part of the authorities in Bulgaria to allow qualified observers to visit the ethnic Turkish areas of the country is quite simple. They have something terrible to hide.

I first applied for a visa to Bulgaria in the spring of 1985, after the first rumors of the mass assimilation campaign began to emerge from the country to a disbelieving world.

I never received a reply to the first application, but soon after Bulgarian officials in Ankara came courting, inviting me out to dinner, attempting to shower me with gifts, and even extending an invitation to take a holiday trip to their country without my wife, the inference being that I would enjoy the delights of state-sponsored friendship if only I would abandon my growing interest in the story.

The second time I applied for a visa in the fall of 1986, I was officially refused on the note that the authorities in Sofia did not think that anything I might write about the state of the Turks would contribute to better understanding between Bulgaria and the United States.

As a result, my research into the forced assimilation campaign was, of need, conducted entirely in Turkey, largely through the testimony of migrants and recent refugees, such as Mr. Ibisoglu, who risked their lives to escape and tell the world about the obscure campaign which, I think, we could best term as the "Inquisition of the eighties."

A full account of my research into the campaign is to appear shortly in the American as well as international editions of the Reader's Digest, which I hope contains a thorough historical as well as eyewitness documentation of the causes and natures of the campaign, despite my inability to visit Bulgaria itself.

I would like to make a few notes, however.

Relations between Turks and Bulgarians have never been good, starting with the Ottoman Turkish conquest of the country over 500 years ago and lasting down until today.

It is perhaps in that context that we should try to understand the fury of the present campaign, the last stage in an historical duel between two peoples of different faiths, cultures and languages.

There has been migration from Bulgaria to Turkey ever since Bulgaria achieved independence with czarist Russian aid in 1878, when Moscow entrenched itself permanently in internal Bulgarian affairs.

This historical relationship would seem to answer the nagging question of the Kremlin's involvement in the present campaign. As the phrase has it, "when it rains in Moscow, Bulgarian Communist Party boss, Todor Zhivkov, takes out his umbrella."

In other words, it is impossible that Sofia could have initiated the campaign without at least the tacit approval, if not active encouragement of Moscow.

One only has to reflect on the massive expulsion of 150,000 Turks from Bulgaria in 1951 in response to Turkey's decision to send troops to Korea as part of the peacekeeping effort at the time.

Why the Soviet Union in these heady days of glasnost would allow its most faithful ally to mount the mass assimilation campaign is an unanswered question. But a frequently cited possible motivation is to use Bulgaria as a testing ground to check the waters of world public reaction in anticipation of the day when Moscow moves against its own minorities, either the Turkic Muslims of central Asia or such perennial restive ethnic groups in the western Soviet Union, such as the Latvians, Estonians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians.

Bulgaria itself offers a strange series of excuses for having mounted the campaign. At first, Sofia denied entirely that anything unusual was happening in the country. This gave way later to announcing that a massive, spontaneous and wholly voluntary movement among the Turkish community had taken place wherein every last one of the ethnic Turks had applied to the Government to change their names.

This is the current stance of the Bulgarian Government on the issue.

When pressed, however, Bulgarian officials often attempt to frame the campaign against the ethnic Turks as some sort of justified retaliation for alleged violations of human rights in Turkey. This argument is about as acceptable as if California mounted a campaign of cultural genocide against the Hispanics there in retribution for alleged mistreatment of Indians in Mexico.

Clearly, human rights are human rights everywhere and cannot be made an extension of foreign policy or revenge.

Unhappily and unbelievably, there are those outside Bulgaria who subscribe to this unsavory theory of justified retribution. If Turkey stands accused of alleged human rights violations, either in the past or present, these are a separate issue to be dealt with on their own merits.

I, for one, would not hesitate for an instant to investigate such allegations and, if invited to do so, would testify anywhere in the world in accordance with my findings.

This brings me to another distressing point which I have encountered all too often, even within Turkey itself.

There is a school of thought related to the justified retributionists which maintains that the West is using the plight of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria as a cold war issue, and that our concern is only a cynical means of tarnishing the image of the East bloc and that in human terms the people who must ultimately pay for our concern are the victims themselves, who face greater oppression after every mention of the issue in the press or in international fora.

It is hard to imagine that the state of the Bulgarian Turks could be any worse than it is today, and it is equally difficult to imagine that if the West chooses silence and refrains from addressing this issue Sofia will suddenly have a change of heart and restore the rights of its Turkish citizens to their names, language and customs.

To the contrary, confidential reports and letters smuggled out of Bulgaria suggest that the ethnic Turkish community wants nothing more than continued and massive pressure applied to Sofia until, like the Egyptians of old, Bulgaria lets the people go.

Every one of my contacts says the same thing. Even if Bulgaria were to restore the names and rights of the ethnic Turks, there is no life left in Bulgaria for them. The only solution, they say, is massive emigration to Turkey, and now.

Turkey, for its part, has repeatedly said that she is willing to accept every last one of the ethnic Turks from Bulgaria immediately.

Bulgaria's equally consistent response, ever since December 24, 1984, has been to deny the existence of one Turk in the entire country.

I thank you for the honor of having been able to address you here.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Goltz. Obviously, your extensive research, although you were not allowed to go to Bulgaria, has given you some valuable insights and obviously strong feelings, and we appreciate both.

In one of your articles you talk about the Bulgarian approach to the "Turkish problem." Of course, we have heard about "problems" before, ethnic problems before.

What threat could the ethnic Turks pose to the Bulgarian state of government?

Mr. GOLTZ. Well, I think I would subscribe to Mr. Ibisoglu's assessment of this, which agrees with what Mr. Schifter and other observers suggest—that with increasing population, the Turks are becoming increasingly numerous as well as increasingly young, whereas the Bulgarians tend to only have one child per family and are becoming a geriatric society of lesser numbers. And I think that is the basic threat right there.

Chairman HOYER. Now, if, as you indicate, this has been President Zhivkov's pet project, what chances do you see that future leaders will allow Turks to reclaim their culture or, as you suggest in the final two paragraphs of your statement, is the only solution one of mass emigration, which the Turkish Government has indicated it would accept?

Do you believe there is any foreseeable prospect of that happening?

Mr. GOLTZ. Only if we continue to put massive pressure on Bulgaria to open up its gates. As an indication of the current Bulgarian attitude toward immigration, I think it well to consider that of Stanko Todorov, the number two or three man in the Bulgarian Government. Mr. Todorov has come out with one of the most chilling statements I have come across, which is, in terms of migration, that instead of taking 3 or 4 months to process applications, all applications will be processed within 3 or 4 hours, but not to Turkey. All applicants will then be sent to other areas of Bulgaria.

So that both on the top leadership level as well as the under leadership level, I think that any relaxation of pressure put on Bulgaria will result only in the status quo and the continued oppression of these people.

Chairman HOYER. Mr. Goltz, I was just speaking with Judith Ingram of our staff, who has followed this, who has particular responsibility for Bulgaria. She indicates that the figures that we have indicate a tiny emigration from Bulgaria to Turkey. Do you have any idea of numbers?

Mr. GOLTZ. The only people who have been allowed to legally leave Bulgaria to Turkey since the campaign began, I think, were 12 children, as of December 31, 1986. I think that number may be up to 17 by now.

I think one should not be seduced by this phenomena, saying that, well, the Bulgarians are coming to their senses. You have to look at—the way I look at it is that the permission for the 12 children to emigrate was granted immediately prior to the Islamic Conference Meeting in Kuwait in December 1986, where Turkey was looking for support for resolutions condemning the assimilation campaign from the various Islamic countries, including Libya, Syria and other friends of Bulgaria.

So, if the Bulgarians released a few children, then it would obviously water down resolutions in Kuwait.

The other thing is, it may be part of this larger glasnost opening policy from Moscow, with the one-sided cease-fire in Afghanistan, the release of Sakharov, and now the release of several children. It is hard to say if these things are all related or not. One suspects that they are.

Chairman HOYER. Finally, let me ask you, in the course of your studies—and I know it focused on the Turkish minority—did you see any evidence that this was a broad scale policy of the Bulgarian

Government inclusive not only of the Turkish minority but other minorities within Bulgaria as well?

Mr. **Goltz**. It would seem so. The Turkish minority were more or less kept until last. The Bulgarians first forcibly assimilated the Macedonians in the 1960's, I believe, followed by the Gypsies and finally by the Muslim Bulgarian Pomaks. They are a fairly obscure group regarded as lost younger brothers of Christian Bulgarians.

But all of these groups and other obscure, more obscure, tiny ethnic groups within the country have also been subjected to this forced assimilation campaign, with the standard array of villages being surrounded by tanks, government officials going door to door with the list of arbitrarily selected names, with the residents being forced to accept their new identity at gunpoint.

I think one thing that I would like to add right here—I have included this in the story—is that in addition to the horror of the knock on the door in the middle of the night, the Bulgarians were not just replacing Turkish names with Bulgarian names, but any old Bulgarian name.

I know of families, two brothers, who have different family names. The Bulgarians came along and gave one Ivanev, and the other one Josefev, or something like this, entirely arbitrary.[2]

Chairman **Hoyer**. I said that was going to be my last question, but I keep going on. This is my last question: Mr. Ibisoglu mentioned 106 captives in Bulgaria. We have a list that has been submitted for the record.

Do you know anything about their situation? I did not follow up with him.

Mr. **Goltz**. I don't know anything about their situation per se. The captives is a peculiar word that I translated directly from the Turkish. What that is is a list of families in Turkey who have applied for repatriation or reunion with a specific individual, and that list is obviously growing every day.

Chairman **Hoyer**. You said individuals in Turkey. Did you misspeak? Do you mean individuals in Bulgaria?

Mr. **Goltz**. No, no. These are families in Turkey who are applying, through the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the Turkish Embassy in Sofia, to get out sons, daughters.

Chairman **Hoyer**. Out of Bulgaria?

Mr. **Goltz**. Out of Bulgaria. And every day this list begins to grow.

I think it is interesting to note on this account that the Bulgarian response to this, the Bulgarians were initially—well, they were willing to talk about this, although of course they had a problem with the names. The Turks would say we want Ayshe Fakmaev, and the Bulgarians would say, we don't know who you are talking about, here we have a Maria Theresa. And so the two sides would have to agree on a number, and then they would talk about that individual.[3]

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[2] The two brothers, Said and Huseyin Mestanev, were given the names Svilen Kalagiev and Asin Mladinov respectively. T.C.G. could not remember exact names at time.

[3] "Ayshe" renamed "Mania"; as both sides refused to use the other's designation, they could only speak about "case 104" or "59," etc. T.C.G.

After the Islamic Conference, the Bulgarians apparently have said that they are not going to allow any member of a family that left Bulgaria illegally to go to Turkey, which basically wipes out everybody on the list.

The other thing that the Bulgarians are saying is that if there is a single individual in Turkey who has escaped and applied for reunification with his wife and children who are in Bulgaria, the Bulgarians are now saying, well, there are three of them in Bulgaria and only one of you in Turkey, thus we have no problems with family reunification so long as it occurs in Bulgaria.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you.

Congressman Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Goltz, are there any other significant minority populations in Bulgaria that are being subjected to this?

Mr. GOLTZ. Well, were subjected. Namely, the Macedonians, the Gypsies—which are a very large population in Bulgaria—and finally the Pomaks. All of these have been assimilated.

And one can say that the Bulgarians apparently had no problem of assimilating them. Oh, certainly there were riots, that they needed the tanks and the soldiers and the knock on the door in the middle of the night. But world public opinion had never heard of the Macedonians, aside from Alexander the Great.

Have you ever yourself heard about a Pomak? How can you care about Pomaks in this obscure Eastern European country?

So, with the experience gained from assimilating these various other smaller minorities, they finally came to the Turks, which as has been pointed out, are the largest single minority in the country, ranging somewhere between 900,000 and 2 million people. But these numbers keep on changing.

Mr. SMITH. How does the assimilation impact upon their faith, especially for the young?

Mr. GOLTZ. Well, you start with the mosques which have been virtually closed throughout the country. The ones that are open are only for old men. Police are at the door to turn back young men. All the various aspects of Islamic tradition from circumcision to burying—wrapping the dead in cloths before burying them and having them face Mecca, Islamic tombstones, the litany goes on and on—this has all been forbidden.

Mr. SMITH. To your knowledge, have the Turks raised this issue in the United Nations and as part of the Helsinki process?

Mr. GOLTZ. To my knowledge, they have. To my knowledge, the Turks, the Turkish Government has brought this up at every international fora that they are invited to.

Mr. SMITH. In a Jack Anderson column on July 21, 1986, he points out that "refusal to agree quickly to a name change is met by documenting cases of summary executions." Do you have any idea how many people were killed?

Mr. GOLTZ. Again, one plays with numbers. But Amnesty International, I believe, has a list of over 100—I guess their last report, 125, and those were confirmed.

The estimates go up to over 1,000.

Chairman HOYER. I would point out to you, Chris, that Ambassador Schifter mentioned 100 plus, which comports with the 125 that you mentioned, in his testimony.

Mr. SMITH. No further questions. Thank you very much.

Mr. GOLTZ. Thank you very much.

Chairman HOYER. I would like to introduce at this time John Porter, a Member from Illinois, also a Member of the Appropriations Committee, who has himself been very active on this Commission and in the various groups in Congress directed for specific human rights concerns, and we are very pleased to have him join us.

I recognize Congressman Porter, from Illinois.

BRIEF REMARKS OF REPRESENTATIVE JOHN EDWARD PORTER FROM ILLINOIS

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your kind words. I appreciate that very much.

I apologize for not being able to be here for your opening testimony. I was at the Appropriations Committee.

I wonder if you can describe in some greater detail the relationship between Turkey and Bulgaria, the two countries?

Mr. GOLTZ. Ancient enmity, I think, is the way we can sum it up.

Mr. PORTER. But there are diplomatic relations?

Mr. GOLTZ. Yes.

Mr. PORTER. And those continue?

Mr. GOLTZ. Yes.

Mr. PORTER. What have the Turks done, as a government, to try to alleviate the situation in behalf of their own ethnic relatives and families?

Mr. GOLTZ. Turkey has declared itself willing to accept them all immediately, for starters. In terms of applying pressure on Bulgaria, again, Turkey is in a bind. Turkey is in NATO. Bulgaria is in the Warsaw Pact.

In another age, one might go to war over something like this, but obviously, any show of force would result in serious consequences. So, Turkey is fairly bound.

I have often asked Turkish acquaintances of mine, in and out of the government, why they don't sever not only diplomatic relations but road contact with Bulgaria, to cut Bulgaria off from its various arms markets in Iraq and Iran.

The problem is that Turkey has problems with Greece, and they don't want to become entirely dependent on either set of highways.

The Turks are in a bind.

Mr. PORTER. What can the United States do that Turkey can't do, given the same set of general circumstances?

Mr. GOLTZ. I think we can do—we can shout the word to the world, basically, and apply whatever pressure, economic pressure that we can on Bulgaria and other countries that we are or will be putting sanctions on, to let them know that we care.

Mr. PORTER. How closely can we tie Soviet policy to this repression of an Islamic minority?

Mr. **Goltz**. Again, this is the $5 question. Nobody is exactly sure of the extent of Soviet involvement, but without at least tacit approval and/or direct encouragement, it would not have happened.

Why the Soviet Union is allowing this to happen, with its—let's call a spade a spade—its closest lacky, no one without intimate notes of conversations between various Soviet leaders and Todor Zhivkov in Bulgaria can know the extent of the Soviet involvement.

What is their stake in this? Is it a testing ground for the day that they will be forcibly assimilating their large and quickly growing Turkish minority in central Asia and the other ethnic groups within the Soviet Union? We can't know.

Mr. **Porter**. Well, the Soviet Union has a great deal of Islamic minority that may sometimes in the next 25 or 30 years even become the majority in its own population, and with its lacky and its tacit approval repressing an Islamic minority in Bulgaria, and with its troops killing thousands and thousands of Islamic people in Afghanistan, how can this help its relationships in the future? How does this fit in, in your mind, to its relationship with the Islamic world and what effect that might have on its relationships on into years to come?

Mr. **Goltz**. I don't know the Soviet Union very well, for starters. I know that they have been trying to play the Islamic card more and more, having their Islamic summits or summits of Islamic leaders in their various republics, as well as inviting people from Bulgaria, Syria, other friendly Islamic states, such as Libya, to come to places like Baiku and then talk about Islam in the Soviet Union and in the world, and to support such things as a nuclear free zone in the Balkans and the Soviet policy in Afghanistan.

Again, I can only give you a number of suggestions of why the Soviet Union might be behind this, or what they could possibly gain from it. I really cannot give a definitive answer, because it remains a riddle for me as well.

If you would like, we can ask Mr. Ibisoglu, who could perhaps explain what he thinks about the Soviet involvement in this. He has traveled to the Soviet Union before and obviously is an eyewitness.

Mr. **Porter**. If he would like to answer, I would be certainly happy to hear it.

Chairman **Hoyer**. That would be fine, if you want him to comment on it. You will have to tell him what the question was, though.

[Interpreted.]

Mr. **Ibisoglu** [through interpreter]. As I noted before, it is impossible for the Soviet Union not to have known of the campaign as it was going along, and it is impossible for the campaign to have started without at least the tacit approval of the Soviet Union, possibly in response to their own minorities in central Asia.

Again, it is my firm belief that the Soviet Union is behind this entire thing, but using Bulgaria as a testing ground for all sorts of things, including this mass assimilation campaign, while itself remaining behind in the wings.

I forgot to mention this in my previous testimony, but would like to mention it now: the name-changing campaign in Bulgaria did not only take place among the living, but also the dead. Even the names of those who had moved to Turkey were changed in records, leaving this contradiction of members of the same family having split names in Turkey and in Bulgaria.

Again, my response to the question of what the Soviet Union hopes to gain from the campaign is the following: They test the waters of world public opinion. If the world chooses silence on this issue, then they will go ahead with their own assimilation campaign with their own various national minorities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to stress this again, that all the name-changing in Bulgaria happened under duress. At the same time, the Bulgarian Government goes out and says this is all voluntary and spontaneous and done with joy. This is a categorical lie.

The other thing that I would like to point out here that I forgot to mention before is that although the Bulgarian Government doesn't like to say much about this campaign itself, they have found their own lackeys amongst some of the Turkish intellectuals who they have forced to write articles, accompanied by their pictures about how delighted they were to have their names changed. Again, all of this was done under duress and is a categoric lie.

As a classic example of this, I would like to show you a letter that I myself was forced to sign to the Turkish Premier saying that I and 50 other prominent ethnic Turks changed our names by our own volition and with happiness and joy, and that Turkey should mind its own business. I myself was forced to sign this statement under duress.

We were all forced to sign this thing, and I would like to add, as well, that there were 60 signatures on the statement. However, there were only 50 of us in the room.

The people who had organized this farce took the liberty to sign the 10 additional names to this document, even though those individuals were not in the room.

Mr. **Porter**. What sort of duress was used?

[Interpreted.]

Mr. **Ibisoglu**. [through interpreter]. One fine day they called us to Sofia, we had no idea what it was about. We came from different parts of the country.

As we came into this conference hall, some of us got together and asked the other ones, well, why are we here?

Well, we had no idea why we were there, but then, because two or three people had prepared this open letter to the Turkish Premier, one of them got up and read it aloud, and then the rest of us were forced to sign it.

There were many of us who didn't want to sign the thing, but they had no other choice.

I would like to explain why I myself signed this thing.

Several days before this letter signing business, the police came to my home and they said that no one will resist the directives of the party, those who will resist will be either imprisoned or killed, brought out to Belene Island in the Danube. Well, I was afraid, in fact, when they came that time that I just managed to keep out of their clutches.

I would again like to stress that possibly some of you have seen some of these magazine articles attached with photos of those who joyously and spontaneously changed their names. I would like to stress again that it is all bogus, it is a categoric lie. All of it happened under duress.

Again, as a basic part of the campaign, intellectuals were rounded up all over the country and removed to police stations without charge.

Even in my own district, in the Province of Varna, 50 young Turkish intellectuals were rounded up, herded off someplace, and nobody has any clue of where they are today.

Please, I am still ready to answer questions. I beg your pardon.

Chairman Hoyer. Mr. Porter?

Mr. Porter. No, I have asked it.

Chairman Hoyer. Well, we are going to close now.

I want to say that we know that there are a number of representatives of NGO's here, nongovernment organizations, who have prepared testimony and who will be submitting them. They will appear in our record of this hearing.

I want to express to them our thanks for taking the time to submit those to us. I will assure you that at least one member of the Commission intends to read them all, and I am sure that others will as well.

We want to thank Ambassador Schifter, Mr. Ibisoglu and Mr. Goltz.

We believe this has been an important hearing and we intend to have further hearings of this nature dealing with national minorities. I want to assure all of those present here that we intend not only to have hearings, but to follow up on the issues that are raised in these hearings, both here in this country and abroad.

As I indicated earlier, the Bulgarians have, in Vienna, indicated the possibility of myself and other members of the Commission visiting Bulgaria. We may well want to pursue that alternative, as well, to discuss with them these issues.

As I stated we believe that the issue of minorities is a very important issue and we intend to followup with other nations.

And I might say that it is a very important issue for all 35 signatory nations of the Helsinki Final Act, including the United States.

I thank Congressman Smith and Congressman Porter, and all our witnesses.

This hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX A

3 FEB 87

SENATOR ALFONSE D'AMATO

OPENING STATEMENT

CSCE HEARING ON

THE TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA

THIS MORNING, THE COMMISSION WILL HEAR TESTIMONY ON THE SUBJECT OF THE TURKISH ETHNIC MINORITY IN BULGARIA. THREE EXPERT AND ABLE WITNESSES WILL APPEAR BEFORE US THIS MORNING: THE HONORABLE RICHARD SCHIFTER, THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS; MR. HALIL IBISHEV, A FORMER BULGARIAN PARLIAMENTARIAN OF TURKISH DESCENT; AND MR. THOMAS GOLTZ, A JOURNALIST BASED IN ANKARA, TURKEY.

THE TREATMENT OF THE TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA IS NOT AN ISOLATED EXAMPLE OF BULGARIAN VIOLATIONS OF THEIR HELSINKI HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENTS. INDEED, THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DENIED TO ALL BULGARIANS, NOT JUST THOSE OF TURKISH DESCENT, THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS. THIS HAS BEEN THE CASE SINCE THE SOVIET ARMY ESTABLISHED AT BAYONET POINT A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IN BULGARIA AFTER WORLD WAR II.

INDEED, NOT ONLY DOES THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT OPPRESS ITS OWN PEOPLE, IT ACTS AS AN INTERNATIONAL AGENT OF TERROR, WORKING ON BEHALF OF ITS SOVIET MASTERS. ITS MOST INFAMOUS ACT WAS ITS GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT FOR MEHMET ALI AGCA, THE MAN WHO SHOT POPE JOHN PAUL II. ENOUGH INFORMATION WAS UNCOVERED BY THE ITALIAN INVESTIGATION OF THIS BLOODY CONSPIRACY TO TIE OFFICIALS OF THE

BULGARIAN EMBASSY AND THE BULGARIAN AIRLINE TO AGCA.

THE ITALIAN COURTS, AFTER A LONG TRIAL, RENDERED A SO-CALLED "MAFIA VERDICT" ON THE ONLY BULGARIAN IN ITALIAN CUSTODY, SECURING HIS RELEASE. THE DEFIANT BULGARIAN STRATEGY OF WITHHOLDING EVIDENCE AND CONDEMNING THE ITALIAN INVESTIGATION'S CONDUCT AND MOTIVES, HOWEVER, FAILED TO OBSCURE OR EXCUSE THEIR DEEP INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLOT TO KILL THE POPE.

BULGARIA'S REPUTATION AS THE KREMLIN'S COVERT KILLERS WAS ENHANCED. THIS INTERNATIONAL OUTRAGE BUILT UPON THE ALREADY STRONG RECORD OF THE BULGARIAN SECURITY SERVICE, THE "D.S.," WHICH WAS ALREADY NOTORIOUS FOR THE POISON-PELLET FIRING UMBRELLA USED TO ASSASSINATE GEORGI MARKOV, A VOCAL OPPONENT OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME, AND SERIOUSLY WOUND ANOTHER CRITIC.

THE BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES COULD NOT AVOID THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IN THOSE CASES ANY MORE THAN THEY CAN HIDE THEIR ABUSES OF THEIR TURKISH MINORITY. THE INCREDIBLE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION THAT THERE IS NO TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA, ONLY ETHNIC BULGARIANS WHO "SPONTANEOUSLY AND VOLUNTARILY" REDISCOVERED THEIR TRUE IDENTITIES AFTER CENTURIES OF SUPPRESSION UNDER OTTOMAN RULE, HAS BEEN GREETED BY AN INTERNATIONAL CHORUS OF RIDICULE.

SENATOR ALFONSE D'AMATO
3 FEB 87 CSCE HEARING

OUR TASK TODAY IS TO DOCUMENT THIS HORRENDOUS AND DELIBERATE ACT OF ETHNOCIDE. WE MUST RAISE OUR VOICES LOUDLY AND CLEARLY TO CONDEMN THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT TO ERASE FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY 900,000 ETHNIC TURKS. DURING THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT'S ASSIMILATION EFFORT, WHICH BEGAN IN DECEMBER, 1984, AND CONTINUED UNTIL THE WINTER OF 1985, BULGARIAN ARMY AND SECURITY FORCES MAY HAVE KILLED AS MANY AS 1,000 ETHNIC TURKS. WHAT WE SAY HERE TODAY WILL BE A SMALL MEMORIAL TO THESE INNOCENT PEOPLE WHO DID NOT HAVE TO DIE, AND A STRONG MESSAGE THAT THE WORLD WILL NOT CONDONE THIS BARBARIC DEED THROUGH ITS SILENCE.

IF WE IGNORE OR FORGET THE FATE OF THESE ETHNIC TURKS, ONE THING IS CERTAIN -- WE WILL ENCOURAGE EVERY OTHER TOTALITARIAN DESPOTISM TO BELIEVE THAT WE WILL TURN AN EQUALLY BLIND EYE AND FAULTY MEMORY TOWARD ANY GENOCIDE THEY MAY CONTEMPLATE. THE COMMISSION'S ROLE, AND THE UNITED STATES' RESPONSIBILITY, IS TO STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND TO CALL TO ACCOUNT THOSE WHO VIOLATE OR DENY THEM. TRUTH IS OUR STRONGEST WEAPON AGAINST THE PROPAGANDA OF DISINFORMATION AND THE INERTIA OF IGNORANCE.

I TURN NOW TO MY DISTINGUISHED CO-CHAIRMAN, CONGRESSMAN STENY HOYER, FOR ANY COMMENTS HE MAY HAVE.

STENY.

APPENDIX B

BALKAN TURKS OF AMERICA
ASSOCIATION, INC.
(Balkan Türkleri Amerikan Birliği)
P.O.Box 108
Brooklyn N.Y. 11209

February 3,1987

The Honorable Steny H.Hoyer,Chairman
Commission on Security and Cooperation
in Europe
Congress of the United States
Washington,D.C.20515

Esteem Chairman and Members of the Commission:

We wish to thank you very much for the opportunity to submit our written statement and the attached documents for your records on the repression of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria today.

We,as members of Balkan Turks of America Association, are proud American citizens of the same Turkish origin. Most of us were born in Bulgaria,went to school and worked there for many years,then immigrated to this country directly or via another country. Our ancester came to Bulgaria 500 years ago from Anatolia,Turkey.Mr.Chairman,we are deeply concerned about the massive human rights violations which are systematically applied against the 1.5 million Turkish minority in Bulgaria.All evidences,direct or indirect,are indicating that a political and/or cultural genocide is taking place and that the Bulgarian Government is totally responsible for racism,religious intolerence and discrimination against its own citizens in Bulgaria today.

We strongly believe that the real objective of these forceful assimilation policies is to destroy the national,cultural and religious consciousness of the Turkish minority in that country.We firmly think that these unlawful and intolerable policies should be resisted by men and women of good will all over the world.We feel that we have a moral obligation to the 1.5 million Turkish minority in Bulgaria to manifest our solidarity with them and thereby to let them know that they have not been forgotten.

We urgently ask you,Esteem Chairmen and Members of the Commission,to do all within your power to see that the systematic persecution of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria is halted as early as possible.Nothing would be more meaningful and striking at the present time for the U.S. Congress than to pass HJR 262 and Senate JR 162 ,to give an important warning to the Bulgarian Government that the the continuation of its inhuman policies will not be tolerated..

Your continued contribution and alertness in maintaining the basic freedoms and the human dignity will be gratefully remembered by the members of my association and,we are sure, by all freedom loving people of our free society.

Thank you very much.

Ahmet Sandikcioglu

BALKAN TURKS OF AMERICA
ASSOCIATION, INC.
(Balkan Türkleri Amerikan Birliği)
P.O.Box 108
Brooklyn N.Y. 11209

This letter was written by a young woman named H. who had been expelled from the university. It was smuggled out by a foreigner named G_ and delivered to H's relatives who live in a village in Turkey, Bajilar . The letter was written in Turkish using the Bulgarian alphabet.

THE HEADING OF MY LETTER IS "THE TEARS OF MY EYES"

O my dear older sister, you've gone, God has saved you. My sister with tearful eyes, how I am writing of our troubles I can't explain. This far, it has been a living death. The troubles which have descended upon us I would not wish upon my worst enemy. My sister, this letter is being brought to you by G_. We became friends last summer at the University Brigada (the compulsory labor teams for students). Something like what happened to us happened to her, her father was killed during an uprising [demonstration: translator's note] and she was raised by her grandfather. On coming to Varna, she tried to telephone me. They said the telephone was out of order, after which she came to the village by taxi. Immediately soldiers brought the taxi to the village head, and [in his office] she was told that I was at the brigada. When I was returning from my Uncle Suleiman's, we met at the well. Because I had no permission to talk to G_, they took me for questioning, after which they released me and let me go to Varna for one day. I am writing this letter in the hotel bathroom. G_ has learned everything. She will find you there. My dear older sister, we are in a giant hell. They expelled me from the university at the end of February. My father was sentenced to three months in Pernik (mining city). While he was there, they took Yuksel [writer's brother] away for protesting, and now no one knows where he is. My mother and grandparents cry day and night. No one is left who understands the condition they are in.

All hell broke loose during Ramazan [the Islamic sacred month]. Ibram Hodja [the religious teacher] who had been sent to a school for [Christian] priests was ordered to preach a Christian sermon during this holiday. On refusing, he was killed. On the second and third day of the holiday, they burned down the Mosque, and cleaned out the graveyard with machines [bulldozers?]. Nine youths were shot in the village for observing the holiday.

My troubled big sister, how shall I write the rest? Half the men in the village have been taken away. For carrying out a circumcision [according to Islamic custom] 14 men have been disappeared. The whereabouts of 28 others are unknown.

In order to make sure that we don't speak Turkish, they have put listening devices everywhere. Last week they went through the village house by house, asking who was going to make the [ceremonial] sacrifice on the holiday [normally a lamb or sheep is sacrificed; a pig is never sacrificed, as it is considered unclean]. As an act of defiance, all the villagers said they would [normally the poor would not]. Two days after the questioning, a sacrificial pig was brought to each house, and they ordered whoever was going to make the sacrifice to use the pig, if they did not, they said they would be buried in the trenches which they had dug. Oh, sister, whether we will make it to tomorrow I don't know. Before, between the villages they had dug big, big trenches. The sinners, that is those who oppose the government, or who explained their troubles to outsiders, would be buried in these graves [trenches]. Later, such pits were dug in front of everyone's house. One day, they will throw us into these trenches, and no one in the world will know. My dear sister, save us from here. This has become Hell for us. If you could come and see, if you asked people's condition, everyone is hurt. In every place there is either someone dead or wounded. For this reason it is forbidden not only to go to foreigners, but to go around to visit neighbors. Here neither life remains for us, nor honor. We never know which night they will enter which house, who they will kill, which chicken (girl) they will take away.

My sister, save us. G_ will explain more to you. The girl both cried and listened. My sister, don't leave us in the hands of this enemy. May God give you health.

Your sister, H

The above letter was translated from Turkish and its original was given to the U.S.Government.

BALKAN TURKS OF AMERICA ASSOCIATION,INC.

DOCUMENT II

DECLARATION

The following persons who have their signatures below
..................................(Name, Surname)

Identity card............No.............place of issue
Directorate of Security..............
Identity card...........No........place of issue......

The Directorate of Security..............I declare that I shall not have my son.............................
.......circumcisioned.

Because it is dangerous for the health and life of my son.

I am aware that if I have this action carried out, I shall be punished according to the criminal code, Paragraph II Article 324 and the Paragraph III of Article 20.

I am signing this declaration in the presence of the official in charge.

....

(Name and Surname of the official in charge)

....
City of Haskova

Declared by ....
2...............

The official in charge..............

NAME AND SURNAME	OCCUPATION	SIGNATURE
1 Mustafa Pehlivan	Köycü	
2 Sünnü Pehlivan	Ev anası	Sünnü
3 Ahmet Alikoç	bakal —	
4 Hacer Alikoç	ev kadını —	hacer
5 Mehmet Alikoç	köylücü —	M. Alikoç
6 Şükriye Alikoç	ev kadını	Şükriye Alikoç
7- Fatma Şen	ev. kadını.	
8- Ramazan Şen	işçi	
9- Osman Aliç	şoför	
10- Sabiha Aliç	ev. kadını	
11 Ağan Pehlivan	işçi -	
12 Kabal Pehlivan	ev kadını	
13 Ayten Candiktar	ev kadını - .	
14 Şeydi Pehlivan	gurgur - .	
15 Mustafa Çalışkan	işçi - .	
16 Saygı Ali	Ev kadını:	Saygı
17- Zehra Şen	(Ev kadını):	
18. Erdoğan Arıtaş	([illegible])	
19. Gülen Arıtaş	(Ebe)	
20 Sinan Özcan	şoför	
21 Kirazgül Özcan	Ev Hanımı	

DOCUMENT I

Statement of Lubomir Popov Deputy Foreign Minister of People's Republic of Bulgaria.

[illegible] В глава III на Конституцията на НР България е заложен един основен принцип: равенство на всички граждани пред законите. Изключва се всякаква дискриминация, основана на народност, произход, вяра, пол, раса, образование и обществено и материално положение. Член 53 на Конституцията постановява, че на гражданите се осигурява свобода на съвестта и на изповеда

DOCUMENT II

ДЕКЛАРАЦИЯ

Долуподписаните:..
(име, презиме и фамилия на бащата)
л.к.серия..............................издаден на ______________
от М В Р ....ЕГН......................................
и..
(име, презиме и фамилия на майката)
л.к.серия..............................от..............издаден от..........
..................ЕГН.............................. с настоящата декларираме
[illegible]
....роден на ....
(пълно име на детето)
год. в гр. ....

Тъй като това е [illegible] детето.

Уведомени сме, че при неизпълнение на тези наши задължения ще носим отговорност по чл. 324, ал. II във връзка с чл. 20 ал. III от Наказателния кодекс.

Настоящата декларация подписахме в присъствието на

....
(име и презиме и длъжност на длъжностното лице)

..............................г. Декларатори: 1.........................
гр. Хасково 2.........................
Длъжностно лице:.........................

SKPC "Asenova Krepost" - Asenovgrad

Ordinance

21

Asenovgrad, January 16, 1985

In connection with the effectiveness of the measures for winning the Bulgarians who have been converted to Islam by force,

I ORDER

1. The attendence sheets on the job, form #76, as of January 1, 1985, should be kept with the restored Bulgarian names.

2. The same requirements apply to issuing travel documents, sick leaves and other documents for administrative services.

3. The use of Turkish language at work and in public places should cease.

4. All individuals with Arabic names who would not present documents of change of names should not be admitted to work.

This ordinance should be made known to all agencies for information and compliance.

The local management officers are hereby charged with its execution and controls.

Director,

Engineer Z. Basamakov.

СИПП "АСЕНОВА КРЕПОСТ" - АСЕНОВГРАД

З А П О В Е Д

№21

Асеновград, 16.I. 1985 год.

Във връзка с ефикасността на мерките по преобщаване на насилственото помохамеданчваните българи

Н А Р Е Ж Д А М

1.Да се заведе присъствието на работа по форма 76 за 1.I.1985 год.с възстановените български имена.

2.Същите изисквания да се предявят при издаването на карти за пътуване, болнични листове и други документи за административно обслужване.

3.Да се преустанови използването на турския език на работните и обществени места.

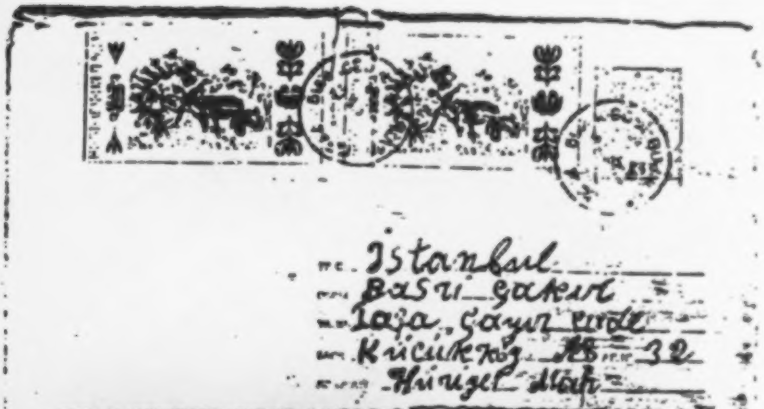
4.Всички лица носещи турски имена, които не представят необходимите документи за преименуване да не се допускат на работа.

Заповедта да бъде доведена до знанието на всички колективи за сведение и изпълнение.

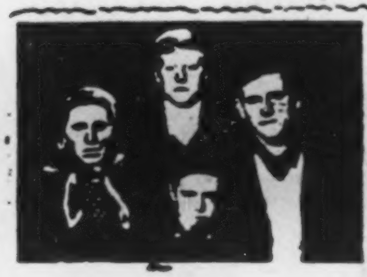
Контрола по нейното изпълнение възлагам на цеховите ръководства по места.

ДИРЕКТОР: /п/
/Инж.З.Гесеманов/

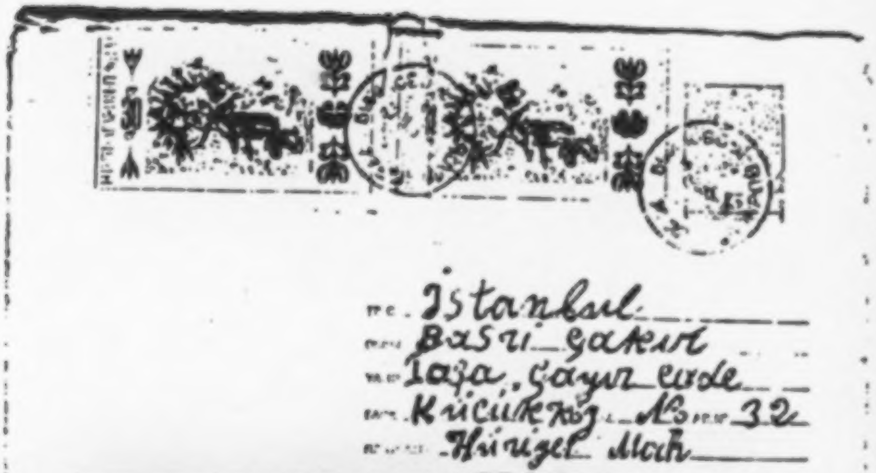
Вярно



Istanbul
Basu gakırl
Iaja çayır evde
Kücükköy № 32
Hürüzel Alak



Ahmet Mustafov Aliev,born in Eskicuma,was killed by the Bulgarian government in Yeni Pazar (Novi Pazar),while serving in the Labor Army,for refusing to change his Turkish name into slavic Bulgarian name.His father,Mustafa Aliev and mother,Emine,along with his brothers Erol and Yuksel were taken from their home by the Bulgarian government, for inquiring the whereabouts of Ahmet.To this date,nobody has seen the Aliev family alive.



İstanbul
Basri Çakır
Taşa Çayır evde
Küçükköy No 32
Hüriyet Mah

E-kicuma'dan olup Yenipazar (Novi Pazar) da askerliği sırasında ismini değiştirmediği için öldürülen Ahmet Mustafov Aliev ve bu olaylardan sonra isyan ettiği için Bulgaristan'da bilinmeyen yerlere sürülen babası Mustafa Aliev, annesi Emine, kardeşleri Erol ve Yüksel.

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

PRESS - RELEASE

11 East 84th Street
New York, N. Y. 10028

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF TURKEY

The Bulgarian daily Otechestven Front published an open letter from a group of Bulgarians, who have restored their Bulgarian names, to the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Turgut Ozal. Follows the text of the open letter:

"To the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

Mr. Turgut Ozal,

We protest most energetically against the systematic attempts that you, in your capacity as Prime Minister of Turkey, have been making to interfere in the internal affairs of our motherland, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, and in our affairs as Bulgarians who have restored their Bulgarian names. As Prime Minister, you have indisputably the right - we would say the moral obligation indeed - to speak about and concern yourself with the situation of the citizens of Turkey, but you have no right to speak on our behalf, trying to convert us into tools of your selfish speculations and political games.

You have taken the liberty of violating elementary political ethics by leveling most flagrantly unwarranted accusations and uttering bellicose threats against the peace-loving Bulgarian people.

We are indignant at your attempts to justify all this before the highly responsible forum of the General Assembly of the United Nations and other forums by referring to non-existent clauses of bilateral and multilateral treaties. You are aware, no doubt, that treaties which allow you to intervene in our foreign affairs do not and cannot exist.

You, Mr. Prime Minister, and some of your ministers and officials have spoken in other forums as well on issues which are of the exclusive competence of the Bulgarian citizens, and then have alleged before your own people that your slanders against Bulgaria enjoy international support. But who has supported you in these attempts and when? Why do you lie to your own people? Do you think that such lies will succeed?

We know the Turkish people very well. We have lived next to each other for centuries. The Turkish people of today are politically mature. You can fool them only for awhile. But, sooner or later, the Turkish people will sure call you to account for that.

We are convinced that your actions will go down in the history of the Republic of Turkey as a most blatant provocation against the Bulgarian people and against the people of the Republic of Turkey, who have demonstrated that they can live in peace and goodneighbourliness. These actions, Mr. Ozal, are a noisy demonstration of jingoistic sentiments and aspirations. By what right do Turkish officials circulate among the Moslem countries a map fabricated in Turkey, according to which two thirds of Bulgaria's territory (including our places of reverence Batak and Perushtitsa, as well as the ancient Bulgarian capitals Pliska and Preslav) are represented as lands inhabited by non-Bulgarian population? Is this not an expression of your imperial ambitions and intentions vis-a-vis our motherland? Your behaviour reminds us of the pompous arrogance of an Ottoman vezier, but this past has long since become history.

You and your followers are trying to disguise your chauvinistic claims under the veil of concern for the rights of Moslems in Bulgaria. There is no unbiased politician in the world who, having visited the People's Republic of Bulgaria, has not seen with his own eyes and has not praised the freedoms enjoyed by all religious denominations in our country. You are well aware of this truth. You are trying, however, to insinuate another idea which makes us state categorically: the fact that some of us are of the Moslem faith is no reason to regard us as Turks. By what right do you mix together the religious and the national feelings of Bulgarians who profess the Islamic creed? Your attempt to pose as a spokesman of the Moslems in Bulgaria, as the sole spokesman of the entire Islamic world is ridiculous and outrageous. You must remember that no Bulgarian citizen, either atheist, Christian or Moslem, has fallen into such a predicament as to need your concern and protection.

Being a political personality, Mr. Ozal, you must very well know that such attempts and poses are in gross contravention of the Turkish Constitution as well. On its very first page it is written black on white that Turkish citizens exist in "integral unity with the Turkish State" alone and that no ideas can violate the principle of separation which stipulates that "religion should not interfere with the affairs of the State".

We wish to ask you: what link can exist between the Moslem citizens of Bulgaria and the Turkish State to allow you to arrogate to yourself the right to speak on their behalf? As far as we know, you have not been proclaimed a caliph of the world's Moslems so that you can look upon the Moslems in our country as your flock.

Since you are fond of asking questions at various international forums, would you like to tell us what has happened to the thousands of Bulgarians living in Turkey? What is the fate of the Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians, Albanians and others in your country? How is their ethnic survival made compatible with Article 66 of the Turkish Constitution, which says that every subject of the Republic of Turkey is a Turk, and with the 1934 Act on the mandatory change of family names, which compels each citizen of Turkey to adopt a family appellation regardless of his or her ethnic origin?

Why are you, Mr. Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, avoiding persistently in your statements to speak about the situation of human rights and of nationalities in your country? You are silent on the five million unemployed and the millions of Turkish citizens which have been driven away from their homes into making a living with their families abroad. You make no mention of millions of Turkish young men and women who are denied the right and the opportunity to education and self-realization. And what about the Kurdish children who are doomed to illiteracy and misery? Perhaps what you should worry about and show concern for is the human rights of the Turkish citizens. Will you agree that it is awkward for you and for the rulers of the Turkish people that on the same day that you have dared to slander our country and its citizens, on that very day the European Parliament condemned once again Turkey for the lack of most elementary democracy and the suppression of fundamental human freedoms.

It is hardly sensible to peep into your neigbour's backyard, when your own house is on fire.

We, the Bulgarians who have restored their Bulgarian names, need no answers to questions which are own concern. These matters are obvious to us and we have resolved them once and for all.

We hope that you, Mr. Ozal, still have the opportunity to appraise soberly in your capacity as Prime Minister your actions heretofore and to draw the necessary conclusions in the name of goodneighbourliness and cooperation between our countries and peoples.

KAMEN KALINOV, Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Member of the People's Assembly, Editor-in-chief of the newspaper "Nova Svetlina", honoured cultural worker, Ph.D. in history.

NADJA ASPARUHOVA, Candidate Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Member of the Council of State, Secretary of the Kurdjali District Committee of the BCP.

ALEXANDER KOLEV, Candidate Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Ph.D. in phisophy.

BLAGA TATAROVA, Candidate Member of the Central Committee of the BCP, Member of the Bureau of the Nationa Committee for the Defence of Peace, Member of the Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement, Ph.D. in history.

ORLIN ZAGOROV, Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Preservation of Cultural Treasures in Bulgaria, Member of the Committee of Culture, Ph.D. in philosophy.

RADI SEMOV, Member of the Central Commission for Control and Revision of the BCP, Secretary of the Kurdjali District Committee of the BCP, Ph.D.

CHRISTO MARINOV, Member of the People's Assembly, Secretary of the National Council of the Fatherland Front.

RADUL CHAVDAROV, Secretary of the Cental Committee of the Dimitrov Communist Youth Lague.

NIKOLAI ANTONOV, Secretary of the Shumen District Committee of the BCP.

RADUL CHAVDAROV, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Dimitrov Communist Youth League,

ASSEN SEVARSKI, Member of the Union of Bulgarian Writers, poet, deputy editor-in-chief of the magazine "Nov Zhivot", honoured cultural worker.

ZARKO HRANOV, Member of the National Council and Chairman of the Kurdjali District Committee of the Fatherland Front,

SVETLANA DILOVA, Candidate Member of the Central Committee of the BCP, Member of the Bureau of the Shumen District Council of the Bulgarian Women's Movement,

YULIA PIRINSKA, Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Trade Unions, Chairman of the Rasgrad District Council of the BTU,

ALLEN ARNAUDOV, Deputy Head of Department in the National Council of the Fatherland Front,

ALDEMIR SIDEROV, Professor in the Sofia University "Kliment Ohridsky", Ph.D. in history,

NAUM SHALAMANOV, twice world weightlifting champion, honoured master of sports,

MIHAIL YANCHEV, Member of the Union of Translators, journalist, lecturer in the Sofia University "Kliment Ohridsky",

~~MIRYAN TOPCHIEV, Chief Mufti,~~

ANDREY ANDREEV, journalist, member of the editorial board and head of department in the newspaper "Nova Svetlina", Ph.D. in history,

MARIN KOLAROV, Secretary of the Iurgovishte District Committee of the BCP,

YULIANA CHRISTOVA, Member of the People's Assembly, political activist, student in the Sofia University "Kliment Ohridsky",

SABOTIN TASEV, programme editor in the Bulgarian Television,

VLADIMIR FERADOV, veteran political activist in Sofia, DELYAN TETEV, Member of the National Council of the Fatherland Front,

ANTON ILIYANOV, member of the editorial board and head of department in the newspaper "Nova Svetlina",

APOSTOL ORLINOV, Secretary of the Turgovishte District Committee of the Fatherland Front,

SUBIN SHTEREV, honoured master of sports, head coach for wrestling in the Turgovishte District Council of the Bulgarian Union for Physical Education and Sports,

SVETLANA YOSIFOVA, political activist in Popovo,

BORIL KOSEV, hero of socialist labour, head of the Venetz agro-industrial complex,

BORYANA RAFAILOVA, district counsellor, foreman in the Shumen tobacco plant "Partisanka", winner of the Gold Order of Labour,

EMIL DEMIREV, Shemen District mufti,

DEYAN CHAUSHEV, engineer, Secretary of the Silistra District Committee of the BCP, district counsellor,

SABINA MARINOVA, hero of socialist labour, worker in the Silistra factory "Dobrudja", Member of the Silistra District Committee of the BCP,

RADI DEYANOV, Vice-Chairman of the Glavinitsa city council for culture,

ANETA ASSENOVA, Member of the National Council of the Fatherland Front, Secretary of the Ruen city committee of the Fatherland Front,

SYDER HADJIEV, Burgas District Mufti in Aitos,

ULYANA KIROVA, Member of the Tolbuhin District Committee of the BCP, Secretary of the BCP Committee of the Grain and Feed Plant in Tolbuhin, district counsellor, winner of Gold Order of the People's Republic of Bulgaria,

SERGEI RADOMIROV, Chief Physician of the Tervel District Hospital, honoured physician,

HUBEN HUBENOV, Tolbuhin District mufti,

SUBI HADJIEV, Haskovo political activist,

CHRISTO NIKOV, Member of the Bureau of the Kotel City Committee of the BCP, Chairman of the City Committee of the Fatherland Front,

LUBOMIR ALEXIEV, Member of the People's Assembly, head of agricultural brigade in Medovets, Varna District,

SOKOL HUBENOV, worker of the Record Plant in Plovdiv,

CHAVDAR KURDOV, Plovdiv District mufti and acting Kurdjali District mufti,

ANATOLY RAFAELOV, Director General of the Suhindol plant in the Veliko Turnovo District, city council counsellor, member of the City Council of the Fatherland Front, Chairman of the Sports Club "Losen",

CHRISTOMIR MIHAILOV, ballet master of the Russe National Opera,

EMILIA KOVACHEVA, hero of socialist labour, winner of the Dimitrov Award, former worker of the Russe plant "Dunavska Koprina",

LUDMIL ANASTASOV, hero of socialist labour, honoured master of sports, world wrestling champion,

ANDREY RADOSLAVOV, hero of socialist labour, head of agricultural bridage in Trapishte, Rasgrad District,

ILIYA GEORGIEV, Rasgrad District mufti,

ZINA TIHANOVA, honoured teacher, teacher in the Vasil Kolarov High School in Rasgrad, political activist,

SANYA DERVISHEVA, political activist in Pleven, widow of a BCP functionary killed in the anti-Fascist struggle,

MARINA ZARKOVA, political activist, deputy head of department in the newspaper "Nova Svetlina",

EMILIYA GAVAZOVA, Member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Teachers Union, deputy principal of a public school in Mlechino, Kurdjali District, MARTIN KAMENOV, hero of socialist labour, head of the construction brigade "Georgi Ivanov" in Kurdjali,

ANDREY VIDENOV, head of tobacco brigade in Boyno, Kurdjali District,

MARIN RAICHEV, head of a mining brigade in the Zvezdel Mine, Kurdjali District, winner of the Order of Georgi Dimitrov,

SABI SHIEREV, Secretary of the Mayor's office and secretary of the BCP organization in Turnovtsa, Turgovishte District,

FELINA ARSOVA, Mayor of Kus, Shumen District,

ANNA MARINOVA, acrobatics coach of the Gabrovo Sports Club,

NELI DERVISHEVA, teacher of the P. Yavorov High School in Pleven, daughter of a BCP functionary killed in the anti-fascist struggle.

November 12, 1986

An open letter adressed to the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Turgut Ozal, containing the alleged statements of a group of Turkish Ethnic people was published in Sofia in November 27, 1985. The letter expressed the contentment of this group of people for being Bulgarian and living in Bulgaria.

Among the cosigners of the letter was Mr. Lubomir Aleksiyev (originally Mr. Halil Ahmedov Ibisev) who later (summer 1986) emigrated to Turkey recently made a statement explaining the conditions under which the published letter was signed. English translation of the hand-written original copy of the above-mentioned statement is attached herewith.

I do not remember the exact date. It was in October 1985. I was asked by telephone from Varna District Commitee to join a meeting of the National Soviet of the Fatherland Front in Sofia the following day, at 10 o'clock. When I went to the meeting, I saw about fifty other Turks in the hall. I asked my friends the reason why we were gathered here but they did not know it either.

After some time, Fahrettin Halilov (Kamen Kalinov) came and took the floor. He declared that they had written a message addressed to the Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal which he would read and he said that everybody would sign it afterwards. In the letter, it was written that we had voluntarily changed our names, that we believed ourselves to be originally Bulgarians and we were happy to live in Bulgaria, that Turks should deal with their own affairs and not interfere with our internal affairs.

As the message was read and opened to signature, some of us hesitated to sign it. However, at the end, unwillingly, we signed it all. I thought that, if I did not sign this letter, the Turkish Minority I represented would be in a difficult situation and be subjected to torture and that something might also happen to my dearest wife and children. So I was obliged to sign it under the name of Lubomir Aleksiev. Some time ago, someone from the Varna District Committee had threatened me that if I resisted the instructions of the party, my membership of the Parliament would fall and that I would not see my wife and children anymore.

There were some ten other names under the message who could not attend the meeting due to various reasons. It was said that those persons would sign the message later.

The people who attended this meeting signed the message under pressure.

Halil Ahmedov Ibishev

ATAA
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TESTIMONY BY THE ASSEMBLY OF TURKISH AMERICAN ASSOCIATIONS GIVEN TO THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

As we enter 1937, the Bulgarian Government is answering world-wide charges of gross human rights violations of its ethnic minorites by stating, quite simply, that it has no ethnic minorities, but only Bulgarian citizens. Some people, in Bulgaria, according to their government's statements, had ancestors who were subjugated by the Sultans and this modern day Bulgarian Government is "liberating" them. Now, they are all Bulgarians and there are no ethnic minorities.

How could the Bulgarian-Turkish minority, numbering over 10% of the population of that country, completely disappear within a year? The Bulgarian Government's effort to "Bulgarianize" its Turkish ethnic minority started to intensify in 1985, when it conducted a gun-point assimilation campaign to force the Turkish minority to change their Turkish/Moslem names to Bulgarian/Christian names. The Turks in Bulgaria consider their Muslim names essential to their religious and ethnic heritage. Attempts to change their names are tantamount to destroying their personal and cultural identity. The Bulgarian authorities at first claimed that no such events had occurred andthen changed that denial and asserted that the Turks really wanted to change their names and were doing so on their own initiative. During this campaign Bulgarian security forces would surround a village in the middle of the night. People were taken from their homes and with a gun pointed at their heads they were forced to sign identity cards with their new "Bulgarian" names filled in. Men who refused to sign the paper were beaten; some were forced to watch as militia men made advances toward their wives and daughters. The women were sometimes compelled to disrobe completely, and several were raped in front of their families. If these tactics did not work, men were taken off to prison. Several hundred have not been heard from again.

Islamic religious practices have been banned. Mosques have been closed and worshippers suffer official harassment. Children's religious education has been prohibited, as well as the Muslim rites of circumcision and burial,and the observance of religious holidays. Regional newspapers have published numerous articles attacking Muslim beliefs, customs and religious practices.

Ethnic Turks in Bulgaria can no longer speak Turkish in public or perpetuate their Turkish language and heritage in Turkish schools. Fines have now been imposed for speaking Turkish, even at home.

Travel for the Turkish minority has been severely restricted and curfews have been imposed. Some Turkish villages have been sealed off. In other cases, people have been forced to migrate to more "secure" areas.

How does this concern us in the United States? Many people, with a Bulgarian Turkish background, are now American citizens. They have had to leave close relatives, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and especially children, behind in Bulgaria. They are greatly concerned, not just for the safety of their relatives, but also for their very lives. Many have lost all contact with these relatives. Letters addressed to people with what had been their legal Turkish names are returned to the sender with the words "addressee unknown." Families traveling out of Bulgaria must leave one child behind to insure their return. The entire Turkish-American Community in the United States is greatly distressed at this campaign aimed at their relatives and friends in Bulgaria.

As the nationwide representative of the Turkish-American community in the United States, the Assembly of Turkish American Associations has made the plight of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria one of its top priorities, and will continue to pursue all avenues available to it in exposing the Bulgarian Government's despicable campaign of forced assimilation. ATAA has communicated with a wide spectrum of U.S. and international authorities in exposing this tragic situation and has calledupon responsible parties around the world to bring all possible pressure to bear on the Bulgarian Government to restore the fundamental human rights of the Turkish minority. The voice of world public opinion must be raised in condemnation of this massive violation of human rights in Bulgaria.

To this end, ATAA has undertaken extensive correspondence on this issue, writing to both President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz, to every member of Congress, to the Bulgarian Ambassador in Washington, to the Bulgarian Ambassador at the U.N.,to the members of the Council of Europe, and to every major world human rights organization.

The Reagan Administration has condemned Bulgaria's actions against its Turkish minority, which the Turkish-American community greatly appreciates. We urge the government to continue to express American concern in bilateral contacts with the Bulgarian Government and to take every opportunity to focus international attention on this deplorable situation.

The Assembly, as stated above, has written to every Member of Congress, informing them of the tragic plight of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria and asking for the support of the United States Congress in condemning Bulgaria's brutal repression of its Turkish minority.

Bulgaria's forced assimilation of its ethnic Turkish minority is in direct violation of numerous treaties and international agreements to which Bulgaria is a party. Among these is the Neuilly Peace Treaty, signed between Bulgaria and the Allies on November 27, 1919, which included provisions recognizing the minority rights of Turks in Bulgaria. The Treaty of Turkish-Bulgarian Friendship of October 18, 1925 further guaranteed the Turkish minority in Bulgaria certain rights and protections.

The following international agreements and documents also secure the minority status and rights of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria:

- Paris Peace Treaty, February 10, 1947, Article 2.
- Universal Declaration on Human Rights, December 10, 1948.
- International Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Racial Discrimination, December 1965.

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, December 16, 1966.
- International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, December 16, 1966.
- Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe(CSCE) Final Act, August 1, 1975.
- CSCE Madrid Concluding Document, 1983.

It is evident Bulgaria is violating its contractual obligations and makes a mockery of a fundamental principle of international law and order.

Bulgaria has recently mobilized its extensive propaganda machinery and academic establishment to rewrite the history of the Turkish minority. Earlier this year the Bulgarian daily Otechestven Front (Fatherland Front) published the findings of what it called a 30-year anthropological and morphological study of exhumed skulls from an area of the Turkish minority. The study claims only "pure" Bulgarians inhabited the area since the Middle Ages. This racist pseudo-scientific study is said to "prove" that those claiming to be Turks are, in fact, descendants of Bulgarians forced to convert when the country was under Ottoman rule. This so-called science brings to mind the Nazis' practice of measuring skulls to prove the inferiority of Jews. Bulgaria now resorts to the ruse of simply classifying the whole Turkish minority as ethnic Bulgarians and claiming there is no Turkish minority in the country.

In addition to exhuming skulls in cemeteries,the Bulgarians are also obliterating any Turkish names they find on tombstones. In other words,they are trying to make it appear that there never was a Turkish ethnic group in Bulgaria.

Turkey has been and is ready to enter bilateral negotiations on all aspects of the situation, including the conclusion of a new emigration agreement. Since Bulgaria has not reponded to Turkey's overtures, the Turkish Government has had no recourse but to raise the issue at the appropriate international forums.

Since 1985 the issue has been discussed at the following international meetings:

- Meeting of Experts on Human Rights, as a follow-up of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Ottawa, Canada, May 7 - June 17, 1985.
- The Council of Europe, July 1985.
- The Tenth Anniversary Meeting of CSCE in Helsinki, Finland in August 1985.
- The 23rd Session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Sofia, Bulgaria, October 8 - November 12, 1985.
- The UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva, March 1986.
- The CSCE Meeting of Experts on Human Contacts in Bern, April 2 - May 27, 1986.
- The Social Meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, May 20, 1986.

Resolutions condemning the acts of violence against the Turkish minority in Bulgaria were adopted by the parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on September 26, 1985, and the North Atlantic (NATO) Assembly in October of the same year.

A humanitarian solution must be found to end the suffering of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. American citizens with relatives in Bulgaria want to be reunited with their loved ones and want their friends and relatives in Bulgaria to have their basic human rights respected. Pressure must be brought to bear on the Bulgarian Government until they change their repressive practices. Bulgaria is asking for improved trade and economic relations with the United States. This is an opportunity to link improved relations with this very extremely serious human rights issue.

The Assembly of Turkish American Associations is submitting this report to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe for inclusion in the hearing record. Additionally, we hereby make an urgent appeal to the Commission to do everything in its power to bring this issue before the Congress. The Bulgarian Government hopes that this campaign will end quickly and that world public opinion will soon forget. This must not happen.

Respectfully submitted: February 19, 1987

FREE BULGARIAN CENTER

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STATEMENT.

As they follow with great concern the hearings held by the US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe on the Bulgarian government's attempt, since 1984, to forcibly assimilate its Turkish minority, all Bulgarians abroad are deeply disturbed by the reports of grave human rights violations.

Condemning unequivocally such actions, and expressing our sympathy to both our compatriots of Muslim faith and our co-citizens of Turkish origin, the FREE BULGARIAN CENTER wants to publicly voice our indignation and appeal to the free world to make the fundamental distinction between the Bulgarian nation and its Quisling government.

This differentiation is, unfortunately, often ignored or not clearly spelled out, a fact we deeply deplore as it unjustly causes a great prejudice to our people. It is not sufficiently emphasized that the Bulgarian people are not accomplices in the infamous schemes of the Communist government, but, quite on the contrary, are its principal victims.

The principal witness at the hearings, Mr.Halil Ibishev himself, testified before the Congressional Commission that "Although many Bulgarians are against this policy of oppression and ethnic persecution, they cannot speak up for fear of being punished." In his interview with Radio Free Europe, Mr.Ibishev, until recently a member of the Bulgarian parliament, repeated that the Bulgarian people are not guilty, and "the responsibility belongs entirely to the Bulgarian Communist party."

The Bulgarian nation has had a long and proud tradition of ethnic tolerance, unequaled in Eastern Europe. In the past, Bulgaria has offered hospitality and citizenship to large groups of emigrants, and tens of thousands of "White" Russians, Armenians and other foreigners who found refuge there would readily testify about the absence of xenophobic and racist feelings toward the minorities.

In more recent years, under the harsh conditions of World War II, Bulgaria was one of only two or three European countries which refused to deliver its Jewish citizens to the Nazis. Braving threats and tremendous pressures, the overwhelming majority of the nation stood by its persecuted Israelite compatriots and succeeded in saving their lives. Not one single Bulgarian Jew ever perished in Nazi camps. Thus, at the end of WWII, more than 40,000 Jews, or nearly

90% of the Jewish minority, were able to leave Bulgaria and settle in Israel.

In spite of the country's centuries-long and often bloody struggle against the Ottoman domination, the relations between Bulgarians and the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, on the human level, have always been good. Even at the liberation, in 1878, when the Ottoman forces left the long-occupied country, no reprisals or massive acts of vengeance took place against the remaining Turkish minority, and none occurred during the following 65 years, while modern Bulgaria was built. The Turks, living in pre-Communist Bulgaria behaved as peaceful and loyal citizens; in return, their religion, language, customs and ethnic identity were scrupulously respected.

Against the backdrop of this well-documented record, it is therefore tragically ironic that Bulgaria's name should be involved in a shocking case of ethnic and religious intolerance, and brutal violation of the minorities' human rights. If the accusations of state-organized violence are proven true, every decent Bulgarian will feel profoundly saddened and indignant, because such acts are in total contrast with the nation's ethics, customs and traditions. Even if there had not been "hundreds killed", as alleged by some Turkish sources, the murder of one single Bulgarian-Muslim, or one ethnic Turk, for refusing to abandon his name, faith and tongue, should give enough reason for shame and outrage.

Undertaken in a country well-known for its racial tolerance, the current campaign against Muslims and ethnic Turks in Bulgaria raises the question of the Bulgarian government's sovereignty. It is one more confirmation of the fact that Bulgaria today is not an independent nation. As spelled out in the regime's new Constitution, the supreme state power is exercized by the Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist party, which, in turn, is subordinated to the leadership of the Soviet Communist party. The foreign policy of Bulgaria, like all its major policies, is therefore determined by the Soviet Union. It is unthinkable that the present repressive measures have been conceived and executed without thorough discussion with, and approval by, the Soviet authorities. Consequently, in establishing the responsibility for these human rights violations, one cannot avoid looking, beyond the obvious culprits in Sofia, in the direction of the Kremlin. It is indicative that the forced assimilation of the Turkish minority started abruptly and unexpectedly, as if obeying an order. Indeed, even the figures in the last official census in 1965 still showed 746,755 "citizens of Turkish origin."

It should be pointed out that the violence and lawlessness endured by the Turkish minority are inherent to the Communist system itself and have been the daily lot of the entire Bulgarian population for over 42 years, since the beginning of the Soviet occupation in 1944. The regime's dismal record contains the disappearance of tens of thousands of Bulgarians; the execution of several hundreds, sentenced to death by the so-called "people's tribunals"; the abolition of the free press; the censorship on publications, films and the arts; the ban of political and cultural associations; the suppression of the democratic opposition by sending its members to prison or concentration camps; the insurmountable difficulties in obtaining passports, amounting to a virtual ban on travel abroad; the countless cases of arrests and internment for political reasons, of police brutality and many other deprivations of elementary civil rights.

As for the reasons for this sudden campaign against Muslims and ethnic Turks, we can only speculate at this time. Some likely explanations, which retain our attention, are hidden in the demographic statistics: the Bulgarian majority shows a slower rate of births (maybe related to the depressing conditions of life in the country and a prevailing sense of hopelessness), than the Turkish minority. Another possible reason could be searched for in the readiness of the Bulgarian government to provide a testing ground for the Soviet authorities, who are already faced with significant problems concerning their non-Russian ethnic populations. Some connection between the assimilation campaign in Bulgaria and the old strategic goals of Russia, aimed at reaching the Straits through Bulgaria and Eastern Thrace, (a territory ceded by Turkey to Bulgaria in 1913, at the end of the first Balkan war, but then reoccupied by Turkey), is also not to be excluded.

Whatever the reasons, we want to emphasize that the violent methods employed against any minority are repugnant to the Bulgarian people and contrary to their feelings and traditions.

FEBRUARY, 1987

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